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I confirm that this Thesis is entirely my own work.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to the children, families and staff of the Pen Green Centre for Young Children and their Families with grateful thanks for their support.

I also thank the children, families and staff of the municipal infant-toddler centers and pre-schools of Reggio Emilia for their inspiration, in particular the dialogue of Mirella Ruozzi.

I also thank Dr Bridget Egan and Professor Jane Payler for their vision and dialogue throughout my period of study and research.

UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

ABSTRACT

Observing and Understanding Decision-making in Two-Year-Olds in Dialogue

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Doctor of Education
April 2017

This study critically examines how the decision-making of two-year-old children may take place and may be interpreted in dialogue. The aim is to increase adult understanding of the decision-making experiences of children. The decisions, as perceived by parents and practitioners as participants, are situated within the non-verbal as well as the verbal dialogue of the children and are interpreted through the dialogue of the interpreting adults.

Case studies focus on three children drawn from families and settings willing to engage in extensive observation and analysis. The study is conducted with dialogism meta-theory containing a contextual social constructionist approach. The principal research methods are naturalistic video observations of the children over the course of their third year and video analysis sessions with parents and practitioners. I use a second-person approach to observation that acknowledges my presence with the children.

Phenomenological principles underpin the interpretation. Multi-modal interaction analysis accesses aspects of the children's phenomenal minds (here indicating no separation of mind and body), namely their expressions and responses to each other. The children's dialogue is discussed in terms of Buber's *I-You* relation and *I-It* attitude to the other, and in terms of what the children make relevant in their decisions in and with the world.

Questions are raised about how decision-making in dialogue can be understood, discussing in particular the situated nature of this understanding, with the aim of contributing to the processes of observation and understanding in the future.

A key contribution of the study is the exploration of mutuality and contextual knowing involving the perceptions of the adults closest to the children, and the contextual continuity of knowing in adults developing professional judgement in situations of uncertainty, and yet of relevance to the children.

Keywords: decision-making /two-year-old /dialogue /children /parents / practitioners /observing /mutuality /multi-modal /phenomenology

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Introduction

The Decision to Study How Decisions are Made

There has been a marked increase in two-year-old children in UK professional settings in recent years. This is set to continue in policy and practice with the further expansion in early education entitlement funding potential provision for forty per cent of two-year-olds (Department for Education 2015). The actual supply of places will depend mainly on economic decisions in each setting, with new funding formulas due in 2017-18. The likelihood is that more practitioners will be working with two-year-olds for the first time. The expansion raises many considerations about the appropriateness of the provision particularly in terms of relational pedagogy (Dalli, White, Rockel, Duhn with Buchanan, Davidson, Ganly, Kus and Wang 2011). Calls for relevant continuing professional development (Georgeson, Campbell-Barr and Mathers 2015) aim to keep pace with the rate of change in children's provision. Practitioners' interpretations of the children especially could have stronger justification if they were based on greater non-verbal literacy (Nyland 2009). For the children the professional setting is usually a far more complex relational environment than the home. I set out to examine how the children make decisions in such contexts.

For clarity I define my terms at the outset. I am considering *decisions made with dialogical agency*. For the purposes of this study a decision is understood to be an action-orientated choice, 'selecting one of a number of available courses of action' (Iannone 2001)(online). The significant condition is the child could have done otherwise. Awareness of alternatives and the selection are part of the decision as well as the final action. In current usage (Sairanen and Kumpulainen 2014) agency indicates acting deliberately making free choices. Dialogue is not *dia* -defined or limited as two, but as 'through' or 'by' logos, that is in knowledge and discourse (Linell 2009:4) with the other. The term *dialogical agency* indicates an existential nature, *being* in relation with the other when choosing, not only thinking and taking action. The difficulty of knowing about this process is initially about knowing when the decision is made in *dialogue*. The approach developed in this study generates

ideas for interpreting and understanding decisions in these circumstances of uncertainty.

The potential for new knowledge in this research derives from the nature of the study, it is not only methodological, it is also epistemological. I recognise that a child knows and understands through dialogue and adults know and understand children through dialogue. My motivation comes from two locations in the vanguard of early childhood education: Pen Green and Reggio Emilia. Both are concerned with who knows and how knowledge is constructed. These influences contribute to the epistemological and ethical underpinning for the study. Firstly, the active involvement of parents in their children's learning (Tait and Lawrence 2014; Whalley and Arnold in press) is a core value at the Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families, in Corby, Northamptonshire. I have been involved in research there with parents and staff for twenty years, and this is where one of the case studies for the thesis is set. Co-construction of understanding about children between the most important adults in the children's lives is an established modus operandi. Secondly, my work for three years in the municipal infant-toddler centres of Reggio Emilia, Italy, within their dialogical approach to young children's education, was formative. There particular emphasis is placed on integrating the environment and the community, so the children's relations with each other, with adults and with the environment and culture *constitute* the meaning-making as well as the context for their learning.

From these influences I began to see the agency and interactions of children dialogically, and in this thesis I seek to continue the research into the agency of children as mutually aware social beings. From the outset the children are recognised as competent embodied protagonists situated in their community and phenomenal world, to be understood with their parents and practitioners. This recognition has a bearing on the selection of participatory analysis in the thesis methodology to work within these multiple levels of relationships. The children's situations are recognised in *contextual* social constructionism (Linell 2009) and in *contextual* imaginative variation (Giorgi and Giorgi 2003).

The aims of the research are to understand how decision-making experiences are for children in dialogue and how they can be interpreted in dialogue. The key research questions that this study therefore seeks to address are:

1. How are decisions made in dialogue in the children's lived experience?
2. How are decisions observed and understood in dialogue?
3. What are the implications of the understanding generated for practice with children under the age of three in professional education and care settings?

The emphasis is on *how*, not what or why the decisions are made. I consider a double hermeneutic (Giddens 1982): one for the interpretation of the children's decision-making processes, and one for the understanding-processes of the adults. I examine decisions between children and understandings of them constructed between adults, all made in dialogue. The second chapter establishes the theoretical underpinning for dialogical agency in decision-making. The ontology of the study starts from Buber's (1970) philosophy of dialogue and existential phenomenology that focuses on *I-You* relations. I broaden the scope to adopt Linell's (2009) dialogism as a meta-theoretical framework containing social constructionism for the generation of meaning, the embodied experience of a decision understood through phenomenology, and the expression of experience and meaning understood through semiotics in the form of multi-modality (Figure 2.1).

The epistemology of understanding decision-making experiences in dialogue forms the ground for the methodology. Dialogical theories also underpin the nature of understanding of decisions made with dialogical agency in the field. For this reason, the theoretical underpinnings precede both the literature review and methodology chapters. In the third chapter I review the literature on relatedness and decision-making. The research on two-year-old children making decisions in naturalistic settings is a notable gap in the field. I position this thesis in terms of what it builds upon and where it extends beyond existing knowledge.

In the fourth chapter I explain the methodological approach to studying how decision-making in two-year-olds in dialogue may be observed and understood. There are three case studies of children's experiences observed and interpreted in a

participatory visual analysis by their parents and practitioners. The interpretative dialogue stands within contextual social constructionism (Linell 2009). Since the tenor of the thesis is appreciating agency in relation and the ethical relation with the participants is an integral element of constructivist research in dialogue, I outline a coherent approach in the ethics section before detailing the methods used. This emphasises that the ethical encounter is part of the entirety, and is not to be viewed as only an adjunct to methods.

I examine the findings from the participatory and thematic analyses in the fifth chapter. In the sixth chapter I critically analyse these findings about the children's decision-making by looking at resonances with and differences from the theoretical underpinning. In the seventh chapter I set out the findings regarding the participants' understanding of decision-making, and in Chapter Eight I discuss the development of the participants' understanding of decision-making that has been generated in dialogue. In the ninth chapter I discuss the understanding of the decisions made with dialogical agency by the children in these cases beyond existing research and knowledge.

In short the fifth, sixth and ninth chapters address the first hermeneutic about the children's decision-making. The seventh and eighth chapters address the second hermeneutic about the adults' understanding. The concluding tenth chapter makes a critical analysis of the implications of the understanding generated for practice with children under the age of three in professional education and care settings. This is in terms of how the approach allows access to children's lived experiences, and the enactment of understanding in professional dialogue and relational pedagogy.

Chapter Two

Dialogical Agency in Decision-making and in Understanding

In this chapter I start with Buber's (1970) ontology to explore how the quality of relations may define them as dialogue and thereby define the form of a decision made in dialogue. I then examine the rationale to broaden the theoretical frame. I set out the theoretical underpinning for interpreting situated embodied decisions through phenomenology and multi-modality. I consider the agency and attention required for making decisions. Finally I present how these principles inform the thesis.

In broadening the theoretical frame I adopt dialogism as a paradigm and a meta-theoretical framework for the thesis. It operates at a level above any one theory of dialogue and weaves dialogical theories together. As a part of the recent 'dialogical turn' Linell (2009:xxvii) presents a distinctive *situated* approach to dialogism and emphasises sociocultural phenomena: contexts, interaction and the contribution of the 'other' (Linell 2009:7). It works, in Linell's (2009) view, as a general epistemology for how people acquire knowledge and make meaning. Dialogical meta-theory includes inter-subjective interpretation of decisions by research participants in contextual social constructionism (Linell 2009). I use constructivism when the focus is on individuals construing meaning in specific situations, and constructionism when the processes draw on previous constructions and assigned meanings (Linell 2009:105). Dialogism also supports the other dialogical theories I draw on. It may be that binocular vision (States 1985) is not the best metaphor to show the relationship between phenomenology and semiotics in the form of multi-modality. Rather than parallel lenses they can be seen as nested lenses: dialogism, then contextual social constructionism, phenomenology, then multi-modality (see Figure 2.1).

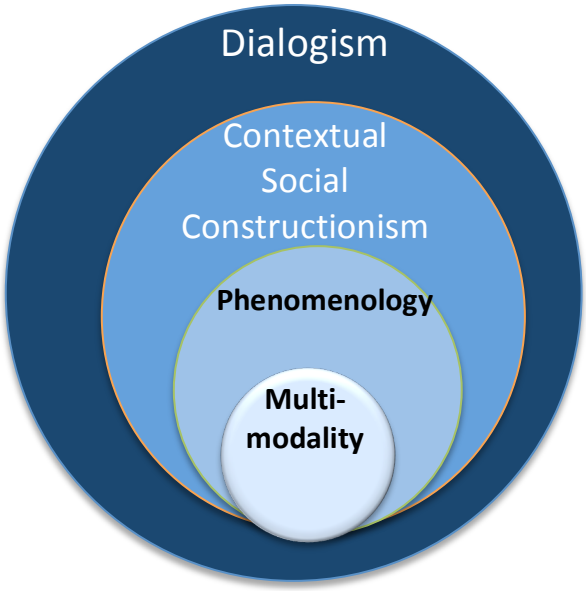


Figure 2.1. Understanding through nested theoretical lenses.

2.1 Buber's ontology of dialogue

The thinking of Buber on dialogue as a way, 'a category of being' (1958:27) with and relating to others is the central ontology for my thesis. Explaining the dialogical nature of existence in our relations with others is the essential tenet of Buber's, 'I and Thou' (cited in two translations 1958, 1970). He prioritises *how* people are with each other, how one regards and engages with the other in an encounter, that is in the event in which relation occurs, in dialogue. In Buber's view a fundamental ontological structure consists of two different attitudes to others: one has an instrumental relationship to use the world summarised when one addresses it with the basic word '*I-It*'; or one directly engages with the whole person in an '*I-You*[1]' relationship, a mutual meeting with awareness and inter-subjectivity to 'experience the other side' (Buber 2002:114). For Buber *I-It* relations are monological, apprehending the other as an object with attributes, and *I-You* relations are dialogical. The *I* and the *You* are each a pole with the dialogue 'in between'. An *I-You*

[1] *I -You* is the favoured translation of Kaufmann (Buber 1970). *I-Thou* signifies more explicitly Buber's focus on the 'close association of the relation to God with the relationship to one's fellow-men' (1970:171). In translating the original German *Du,* Kaufmann differentiates *Thou* for relating to God and You for use in direct relationships with other humans (see 1970:14-15). My study considers children's relationships with each other and so I adopt *I-You*.

encounter may take place in silence. The dialogue is not necessarily a conversation or about conveying information. Robinson (1991) notes Buber's breakthrough of seeing dialogue beyond cognitive significance, 'here is the first trace of a new idiosomatic possibility –he speaks to us through our bodies, dialogically' (1991:93).

In his letters Buber identifies fundamental requirements for his meaning of the *I-You* relation in dialogue, 'Dialogue in my sense implies of necessity the unforeseen, and its basic element is surprise, the surprising mutuality' (Glatzer and Mendes-Flohr 1991:647). Such encounters are 'completely spontaneous' (Buber 2002:241). Stern focuses on Buber's element of surprise as 'the sign that genuine dialogue is happening' (2013:46). Buber makes the significant distinction that *I-You* indicates free will, 'It is in relation that true decision takes place' (1970:65), and that there is only freedom on entering into an *I-You* relation (1970:103). People can be 'two-fold' (1958:15), depending on the relation. 'Every You in the world is doomed by its nature to become a thing, or at least to enter into thinghood again and again' (Buber 1970:69). The process could reverse. Through the changed attitude in an encounter an *I-You* relation could occur 'every thing in the world can - either before or after it becomes a thing – appear to some as its You' (Buber 1970:69).

2.1.1 Dialogue with the world

The all-inclusive potential is qualified. Initially, Buber places actual objects very much within the category of *I-It* relations and limits the potential of the relationship with non-human life at, 'the threshold of language' (Buber 1970:57). It is the nature of potential relationship with non-humans that is Buber's first concern to address and extend his thinking in the second edition to 'I and Thou' (1970). He acknowledges that some reciprocity is necessary, 'Relation is reciprocity' (1970:67). Buber posits a large separate pre-language relational sphere 'stretching from stones to stars' (1958:159). For all that occupies this sphere before mutuality there is latent potential, that could disclose itself to the sayer of *You*, 'awakened by our attitude, something lights up' (1958:158-9), 'flashes towards us from that which has being' (1970:173). For example with a tree Buber (1958) states, 'the relation in which I stand to it is real, for it affects me, as I affect it […]. I step into direct relationship with it' (1958:23-24). For Buber the relation with the tree is embodied and mutual, just to a lesser degree than with a human. Berry warns of the need to think in modes of

mutuality not quantities when relating to non-humans (1985:36). Blenkinsop (2005) presents an ecological relationship in which a person is immersed with levels ranging from innate capacity for communion in abstract dialogue, followed by asymmetrical dialogue in education between teacher and child that may become more mutual through maturation, through to the highest level, the *I-Thou* spiritual relationship with the *Eternal* (2005:304). However, such a relational developmental view does not acknowledge that children may already engage in more advanced mutuality, making meaning and building community, as is recognised in the Reggio Approach (Cagliari, Castagnetti, Giudici, Rinaldi, Vecchi, and Moss 2016).

Clearly for Buber relating to the non-human could be reciprocal to some extent. There is an affect and action on the *I* by the non-human in an *I-You* relation. The interaction is invested with meaning, 'does it matter if it is perhaps with a simmering kettle? It is conversation' (Buber 1958:43). He cites examples of children relating with objects and the environment such as a red pattern in the carpet or wallpaper, and a teddy bear, 'in both cases not experience of an object but coming to grips with a living, active being that confronts us, if only in our imagination […] it is the drive to turn everything into a You' (Buber 1970:78), 'to give relation to the universe' (Buber 1958:42). There is a sequence that starts from a voluntary act,

> It is simply not the case that the child first perceives an object, then, as it were, puts himself in relation with it. But the effort to establish relation comes first – the hand of the child arched out so that what is over against him may nestle under it; second is the actual relation (Buber 1958:43).

For Buber the relation starts with readiness *a priori* to the relation. Expressed in the simplest terms, for Buber dialogue invokes 'the turning towards the other' (2002:22). Buber distinguishes how *I-You* dialogue occurs in the *way of perceiving*, 'No kind of appearance or event is fundamentally excluded from the series of things through which from time to time something is said to me […]. The limits of the possibility of dialogue are the limits of awareness' (Buber 2002:12). It is the attitude that is necessary to encounter the other in relation. Objects cease to be objects according to the state of the address that brought them into presence as essential. They change from objecthood to essencehood. According to his translator, Kaufmann, Buber (1970) suggests essence is what is lived in a living or vital manner, without which Buber treats experience as objectifying, *I-It* relations (Buber 1970:64). Berry concludes that this meeting does not transform the nature of all others into persons

(1985:36). Buber and Berry's thoughts are each of their times and may have been reviewed in the light of the material turn including the more-than-human (Whatmore 2006; Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012), and recent eco-centric paradigms that broaden personhood to offer an inclusive model for humans and nature. Non-western cultures also may be less anthropocentric applying the concept person to animals, plants, and in relating to nature (Malone 2016; Ingold 2011a; Oriel 2014; Schwartz 2014; and see 3.14).

2.1.2 Critique of the value of the twofold I-You and I-It theory

Buber's approach is reductionist and problematic in that it does not extend far enough to encompass experience. Buber sees the direct relation as incompatible with any other thought or deed (Buber 1970:62). It is embodied and yet inactive (Buber 1970:61). Buber presents *I-You* as an non-conceptual and un-mediated relation (1970:63). Buber maintains *I-You* is only directly comprehensible with the other, 'You cannot come to an understanding about it with others; you are lonely with it' (Buber 1970:83-84). Such a limitation would not allow a child to be in dialogue with the world *and* with another child, nor adults to interpret them. Buber's epistemology is criticised (Sweetman 2001) for inaccessibility to examination for validity. Marcel (1984) also asserts Buber's view that external observers may not verify by penetrating into the between of the *I-You* relation (44). One cannot prove *I-You* relations.

Rotenstreich concludes that Buber's claims are more imperative than ontological (1967:132) and calls for a broader epistemology (124). Rozenzweig looks beyond two people in relation to consider their world (cited in Batnitzky 2009:253). This argument is extended by Robinson, 'without it [*I-It*] we could never talk about anything, never share anything, never see the relationships between events or people. Everything would be a swirl of confrontational presence' (Robinson 1991:99). Dialogue takes place meeting in the sphere of between people (Buber 2002:202-205). To understand the processes of moving in and out of *I-You* and *I-It* relations, however, a larger view is required. In particular the role of imagination and memory may have more of a part to play in the *I-It* relations and even possibly *I-You* relations as the abstract converging on the present. In relating to art Buber gives an example of moving in and out of direct relationship with things (1970:65-66). How, in an *I-You*

relation, the *in-between* space may harbour art, culture, imagination, and symbol has rarely been explored (Praglin 2006). Although the *I-It* is recurrent, the *I-You* relationship is a continual possibility and the occurrence of *I-You* and *I-It* is complex.

2.1.3 The intricacy and dynamics of I-You and I-It relations

Buber's thoughts about the attitudes of *I-You* and *I-It* are by definition dual. Robinson finds Buber's thinking 'rigidly dualizing – by seeing no relation or reciprocity between them, no I-You between the I-It and the I-You' (1991:100). *I-It* attitudes and *I-You* relation are interrelated. Far from being inflexible, what is impressive is the intricate dynamism of the transition also noted even within the space of a minute by Marcel (1984:46). The sphere of between is a mutable fluctuating area. These are not straightforward, nor widely separated because one attitude weaves with the other through activities and in and out of encounters. At any time relations cross 'the real, though certainly swaying and swinging, boundary' (1958:25). The states are not predictable, 'in clear succession' (1958:32). They are 'entangled' (1958:32), difficult 'tortuously dual' (Buber 1970:69), and furthermore, 'At times it is like feeling a breath and at times like a wrestling match' (Buber 1970:158).

To conceptualise the relationship between *I-You* relations and *I-It* relations Buber uses a metaphor, 'The It is the chrysalis, the You the butterfly' (1970:69). Metamorphosis does not convey the potential quickness of the interchange. Buber also employs ideas of dispersal 'what confronts us comes and vanishes, relational events take shape and scatter' (1970:80). Marcel (1984) describes 'something which reconstitutes or recreates itself over and over again upon each human encounter' (43) and uses the metaphor of *I-You* as a vapour above the waters of *I-It* (1984:47). Zank and Braiterman (2014) suggest *I-You* has the chemical behavior of elements in relations, 'forming patterns that burst into life, grow, vanish, and revive' (online). The temporary quality of the dialogue is a complete focus and also a severe limitation. Robinson reaches the point of dismissing *I-You* because of this fragility and calls for a more robust conceptualisation of relation (1991:100). Buber (2002) values the whole flow of lived existence (2002:14). For Rotenstreich also, *I-You* relations are significant for the whole flow of life, not only for the partial aspects. Existence 'is not just a collection of these moments but has some continuity in itself' (1967:132). Significantly, Buber sees potential for the sustained residual effect of *I-You*. For Buber

human life is 'so penetrated with relation that relation wins in it a shining streaming constancy: the moments of supreme meeting are then not flashes in darkness' (1958:115). This interpretation suggests a more persistent influence of *I-You* may be possible.

2.1.4 Summary of the theoretical underpinning from Buber

Buber contributes the ontology of how one may stand with the other. Buber considers the *I-You* relation to be direct, embodied and unmediated. Dialogue is constituted between the *I* and the *You* in the *I-You* relation. He begins to consider *I-You* relations co-occurring between people and objects. There is some potential sense of sustained continuity for I-*You* relations despite changes to and from the *I-It* attitude alternating in a complex way. The transitions between *I-You* and *I-It* relations can be summarised as frequent, dynamic, irregular, unpredictable and at times with very quick shifts in both directions. Modes rather than levels of mutuality could include objects and the environment invested with meaning in our *I-You* relations with them. Highly valued as this is by Buber, the *I-You* relation remains a challenge to describe and to verify in observation and interpretation.

2.2 Broadening the dialogical theoretical frame

2.2.1 I-You and Inter-subjectivity as ontology

The dialogical realm that Buber (2002) called between, Marcel prefers to call a philosophy of inter-subjectivity (1984:42). There are many definitions of inter-subjectivity in terms of 'shared' or 'mutual understanding'. However, in his original concept of inter-subjectivity, Husserl (1960) theorises an empathetic stance through which others and their point of view can be seen, 'a mutual being for one another' (Husserl 1960:129). Duranti (2010) makes the important distinction that, for Husserl, inter-subjectivity is a state of potential for, not necessarily the accomplishment of, shared understanding as made clear in the notion of exchanging, 'trading places' (2010:6). It is the existential condition or stance for an *I-You* relation to exist, and what Buber called *a priori* readiness (1958:43). Fichtner (1984) suggests a progressive sequence of inter-subjectivity. They are not ontogenetic stages, but phases of increasingly collective subjectivity. The phases start from coordination of individual tasks. Second is a transition to cooperation that relates individual tasks into a joint activity in a sustained relationship with the other (Fichtner 1984:217). Reflective

communication is Fichtner's third and most advanced phase of inter-subjectivity which takes place in the whole situated interaction, in the in between, in the external collective rather than internal process, and involving objects.

2.2.2 Dialogism as a meta-theoretical frame

The possibility to include dynamic and contextual phenomena (real and imagined) is one reason why Gillespie and Cornish (2010, see 3.1) favour dialogism as a suitable theoretical approach for the study of inter-subjectivity. Dialogism involves the social and also the semiotic context. Gillespie and Cornish draw on the Bakhtin's (1986) concept of voices to convey meaning known from non-present others' voices. Interactions are not isolated utterances as Bakhtin realises. Previous communicative acts and meanings of others constitute 'the boundless world of others' (1986:43) in which the subsequent communicative acts are situated. Bakhtin also finds that overall communication could be described as a 'dialogical overtone' (Bakhtin 1986:92). Utterance and voices are not only verbal, but include non-verbal communication.

Buber allows for difference in dialogue, 'to encounter others and to stand your ground in such encounters' (Buber 1970:84). He affirms the continued integrity of the individual and the first person perspective within relations. *I-You* relationships have already been developed in dialogic scholarship. Rommetveit (2003) proposes a psychology of 'the second person', which builds on the interdependence between '*I*' and '*you/thou'*. Reddy (2008) also introduces a second-person approach based on Buber's (1970) thinking on mutuality. Reddy extends the application of intentional social awareness in *second-person* interpersonal interaction for adults to relate with children through a second-person approach in observation. The adult acknowledges mutuality in the presence of the child (see 4.2). Fuchs (2013) argues that embodied interactions constitute a second person meta-perspective beyond first and third person perspectives. When objects are involved then triadic forms develop (see Secondary and Tertiary Inter-subjectivity in 3.1.4 and 3.1.6). *I-You* has been combined with *It* into an *I-You-It* triad, explored by Markovà (2003), Jovechelovitch (2007), Zittoun, Gillespie, Cornish, and Psaltis (2007), and Lawrence, Howe, Howe and Marley (2014). 'Triadic engagement' is used by Tomasello, Carpenter, Call, Behne, and Moll (2005) in their account of early childhood communication. Linell's (2009) dialogism model extends the triadic model to include the socio-cultural context. His quadruple

or diamond model offers four coordinates of dialogue: *I*/person; *you*(thou)/other; *it*/object; and *we*/'one'/ sign/socio-culture (2009:95). The fourth co-ordinate, that is the 'socioculture', or '*we*' coordinate, comprises meditational means like language and socially shared knowledge of the world. Linell's model indicates dialogue with double-headed directional arrows between inter-dependent coordinates (see Figure 2.2).

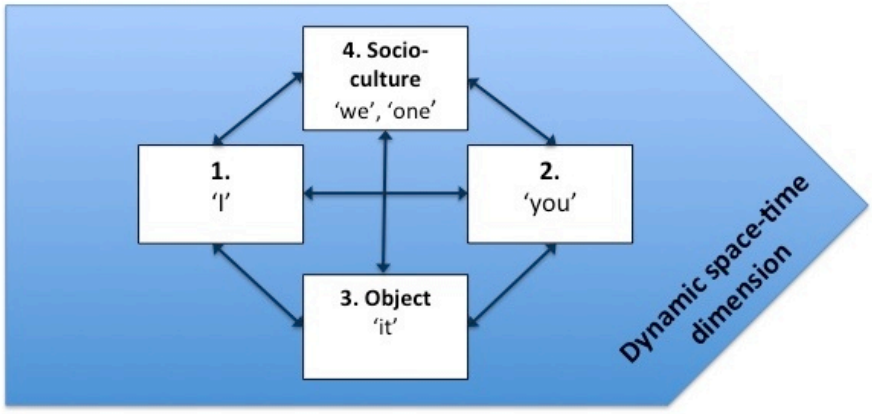


Figure 2.2. Dialogism diamond model (Linell 2009:95)

The whole system is embedded within a dynamic time- space dimension. For Linell (2009) dialogic encounters are composed of both the interaction between participants and the content of communication (2009:98). Form and content are indivisible, they are included rather than excluded as they are by Buber. Using Linell's (2009) model it is possible to track the phenomenological experience of others (dialogue with the world) in the connections between the *I* and *You* coordinates and to track semiotic experience (dialogue with shared meanings) paths of dialogue in the socio-cultural '*we*' coordinate.

Marková (2016) argues that Linell's diamond is a misunderstanding and socio-culture, or the 'we' co-ordinate should be absorbed between the other relations in a triadic model. Linell (2016a) maintains that the triad 'will not work except for very exceptional situation types, such as infant–carer interactions, and intimate situations involving mutual touch and other inter-bodily contacts' (2016a:4). The addition of the fourth socio-cultural coordinate represents constructions of previous constructive activities, 'solidified as cultural ideas. They are not just made in particular situations

but they are somehow situation transcending' (Linell 2016a:5). Construction, for Linell, is not the same as a neutral mediation but as 'co-constitutive' (2009:20) of the world. Dialogue is a co-construction with others, artifacts and ideas previously considered in the world. Linell terms this situated paradigm *contextual social constructionism* (2009:19). This conceptualisation extends Buber's *I-You* in-between area and processes.

It is a major step to move beyond one dialogic theory and attempt to understand children's decisions according to dialogism as a meta-theoretical framework (Linell 2009). It allows the consideration of decisions with complex and extensive inter-disciplinarity. It is this wider perspective that is necessary to acknowledge a broader ontology and epistemology than Buber (1970:83-84) allows. As Bateson puts it, 'the wider perspective is *about* perspective' (2002:210). Such a meta-theory integrates other theories in addition to how the communion-like interaction of Buber's *I-You* dialogue theory addresses the nature of relation, and extends to the interpretivism of multimodality and work on interaction, and to situated and embodied experiences drawing on Merleau-Ponty (2012), Goffman (1974), and Gibson (1979) as mutually related approaches (2.2.3 to 2.3.2). Dialogism has provided the meta-theoretical framework and the broadened scope to underpin this study of decisions made in the world.

2.2.3 Ecological Approaches to Dialogue

The reciprocity that Buber (1970) required for relations with the non-human is rendered by ecological theories. Bronfenbrenner (1996) acknowledges reciprocity occurs not only in face-to-face contact, but also in meaning made phenomenologically with the environment. Vytgotsky's (1978, 1997) initial framework of sociocultural theory focuses on participation in social interactions and sees cultural activities as influences on the co-construction of knowledge. The Reggio Approach holds at its core the social constructivist concept of the child as a competent protagonist in culture actively making meaning through mutual exchange with others (Malaguzzi 1998; Hoyuelos 2013). *Io chi siamo* is a saying in the Reggio area meaning *I am who we are* (Nimmo 1998:297). Community, history and culture are a part of the child and vice versa (Malaguzzi cited in Nimmo 1998:307). This

ecological concept is part of the dynamic of generating knowledge (Malaguzzi 1998:84).

How relation takes place can be seen as the combined response between what various components offer, and what one is able to do though the senses. Gibson (1977, 1979) theorises the person-environment relation as the *affordance*, of "nested" (1979:9) contexts, one within another, in a reciprocal, ecological approach. Affordance is defined as '"action possibilities" latent in the environment, objectively measurable and independent of the individual's ability to recognize them, but always in relation to agents and therefore dependent on their capabilities' (1979:x). One example is the step that is a potential way up or down whether or not a child is able to climb it yet. Interestingly, Buber (1970) also sees relations as latent until actualised by our attitude. For Linell (2016a), meaning comes from the human, not from the object, whereas for Gibson (1979) the capability of the object or environment may define the person's action or use. With people there are higher levels of affordance and Gibson echoes Buber even in the language of exchange, 'the other animal and the other person provide mutual and reciprocal affordances at extremely high levels of behavioural complexity' (1979:137). Gibson differs from Buber by including activity and the non-present in his definition that, 'includes within perception a part of memory, expectation, knowledge, and meaning' (1979:255). In non-perceptual awareness relation may be to what is remembered and to things in our imagination. Mandler maintains that 'meaning in turn rests on what objects do, not what they look like' (2000:31). Gibson (2000) disagrees with a purely functional significance. She argues, based on the embodied experience of the affordance of objects, perception 'is not only active and intentional, it is meaningful […] the underwriting is multimodal, combining information from looking and listening with proprioceptive information from the perceiver's own body' (2000:46). 'An affordance points both ways, to the environment and to the observer' (Gibson 1979:129). The theoretical investment of potential agency in the objects and the environment is one way of understanding mutuality with the non-human world. Objects may be viewed in terms of relations between the human and the object. 'Affordances are really in the *interrelations between object and subject*, in the interworld' (Linell 2009:332). Gibson (1979) and Gibson (2000) contribute awareness of embodied perceptual and non-

perceptual 'voices' placing these extensive potential relations in the phenomenal world considered in this study.

2.2.4 The extent of dialogue with objects and the environment

The phenomena out there are rich in affordances and somewhat ambiguous. Different aspects become visible, 'dawn upon us' (Wittgenstein 1958:212) as the perceiver positions him/herself differently. People's relationships to space and movement are explored in phenomenological accounts. Ingold (2011b) emphasises embodied presence, knowing as we go along, being-in-the-world in mutual encounters with the environment through experiencing sensory participation (Ingold 2011a:99). Gibson (1979) also stresses the non-static nature of perception, distinguishing reality as an 'environment' for a living organism. The dynamic perception is therefore contextual and interactional, and ' 'in an extended sense' these terms come close to 'dialogical''(Linell 2009:158). In this dialogue *I-You* relations with objects as phenomena could be possible, not only *I-It* ones that apprehend attributes. Latour (1996) extends inter-subjectivity and grants artifacts social agency with the notion of interobjectivity. Latour claims that social interaction need not require the physical co-presence but can be framed and structured through the use of objects, a map for example. This phenomenological interpretation ascribes a form of agency to 'a new and unknown actor; the silent thing' (Latour 1993:83). Without reference to secondary intersubjectivity (Trevarthen and Hubley 1978), Linell associates interobjectivity as anchoring intersubjectivity through joint attention to an object or situation (2009:350). The dialogue is still contingent on other humans making sense.

Children's orientations make features of the environment relevant. They may 'talk them into being' (Heritage 1978, see 3.1.4). Like the affordances of Gibson's (1979) memory and expectations, Bråten (2009) advances the distinction of *I-You* relations as 'felt immediacy' and concedes that *I-You* relations may not exclude non-present immediacy, even though it may be more convenient to categorise them as distinct (85). Stern also considers an 'evoked companion' (2000). Winnicott (1971) conceptualises a transitional object as a stable concept for the child to draw on in an intermediate area of experience and that this may remain part of 'intense experiencing' of others in imaginative living (1971:14). Praglin (2006) contrasts

Winnicott's steady unchallenged *hope* of being with the other in the transitional area of absence to the instability of Buber's (1970) *I-You* and *I-It* relations, however Praglin's interpretation misses the potential for overall constancy also conceived of by Buber. The absent and the non-human have the potential to enter into dialogue and decisions. They present changing affordances and call upon the perception of the child differently over time because they are in the flow of time. For Aldridge (2014) memory or insight is not an interruption of the present moment but a fusion in a continuous transformative process, 'gathered together' (522). For Schütz (1967) one is directly experiencing other occasions in the immediate present. Like a window onto other experiences, the imagined could be spontaneous and seem in some way present (Sartre 2004).

At the edge of this study's broadened dialogical framework are the perceived potentials for intertwined relationships with the world that form part of the performative and material turns (Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012; see 2.1.1).
I recognise that Barad's extensive work on new materialism extends beyond the edge of this study. The theory of 'agential realism' blurs the divide between subject and object. For Barad (2007) knowing takes place in an interworld that is a relational whole in which humans are not separate from the non-human. Agency is constituted in the dialogical relationship between them. Matter and meaning are entangled 'intra-acting from within and as part of the world in its becoming' (396). Within this study I view the children as distinctly human, and as part of their lifeworld. As for the agency of that world I adopt Linell's 'extended sense' of dialogue with the world (2009:158). People may make 'metaphorical extensions' ascribing intentionality to inanimate objects (2009:31; see also 3.1.4). The important ontological and epistemological view is that the children may be in dialogue with their world as well as being part of it.

2.2.5 Summary of dialogue

Through Linell's (2009) dialogism as a meta-theoretical framework one can access both the situated phenomenal experience of the dialogue with the other and the semiotic means through which it is expressed multi-modally. This theoretical approach considers the dynamic process of how decisions are made with dialogical agency in interactions with others and environments. Inter-subjectivity provides the

condition for mutual understanding and dialogue, the 'we' relationship. Decisions may take place in and with the world in an extended sense of dialogue. Phenomenology and multimodality access the world dialogically. I consider these theories next.

2.3 Phenomenology, embodiment and multi-modality

2.3.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology studies the perception of phenomena. Merleau-Ponty (2012) defined the phenomenological world as 'the sense that shines forth at the intersection of my experiences with those of others through a sort of gearing into each other' (2012:xxxxv), a similar concept to Buber's (2002) 'turning towards'. One of Merleau-Ponty's translators, Landes, draws attention to the ''fit' as something that is to be accomplished in the act, not something predetermined by the shape of the gears and teeth' (2012:496). Merleau-Ponty uses 'gearing into' to signify an element of attunement. It is a process with the other, 'We gear into other people and we gear into the world' (1962:250). It is an interlocking connection that can operate in reverse, the world can gear into us. For Merleau-Ponty (2004) the hand is honeyed by the honey in an embodied dialogue. Flynn (2011) reads our responsiveness to the world as the sensate and sensible intertwining with bi-directional intentionality, 'one has the image of a fold, and of the body as the place of this fold by which the sensible reveals itself' (online). According to Merleau-Ponty's (1962) intentional arc, as people experience the world, they are responding with embodied knowledge to the call of perceptions that are increasingly refined. A Merleau-Pontian (1962:153) account of decisions that move towards equilibrium is represented by Dreyfus as, 'skillful coping in flow' (1996:15). They move towards an optimum situation (Dreyfus 2002). It is a temporary situation (Rommetveit 2003). Dreyfus (1996) points out that one is always moving towards equilibrium but seldom arrive because a new situation arises.

Shared perception is significant for Merleau-Ponty (2012). He raises the question of whether he and a friend are locked within different perspectives of a scene. The basis for Merleau-Ponty's case is that in viewing the scene 'together', being co-present before it, then the world is not objectified (Merleau-Ponty 2012:428). There are strong similarities in this co-presence to Buber's *I-You* relation. For Merleau-Ponty (2012) the whole fabric of the perceptible world came into the knot of relations.

These principles underpin the participatory methods (sections 4.1 and 4.3). An inter-subjective second person way (Rommetveit 2003; Reddy 2008) of viewing the world may resolve the divide between the quest for subjective and objective ways of knowing. This, for Merleau-Ponty is phenomenology's most important accomplishment (2012).

Merleau-Ponty relates to the non-human in a direct way. The whole of nature is regarded as an interlocutor (Merleau-Ponty 2012). He is open to a situated embodied reciprocal silent conversation with the apples on his counter revealing themselves and 'provoking in us reactions' (Merleau-Ponty 2004:63). There is a distinct echo of Gibson's (1979) reciprocal affordance and Buber's (1970) receptive *I-You* attitude, a direct dialogue with an object,

> This dialogue between the subject and the object, where the subject takes up the sense scattered across the object and the object gathers together the subject's intentions, namely physiognomic perception, arranges a world around the subject that speaks to him on the topic of himself (2012:134).

Red speaks to the child in Buber (1958, 1970) and appears to have the agency to draw Merleau-Ponty directly in through his senses,

> I lose myself in this red that is in front of me without qualifying it in any way; it certainly seems that this experience puts me in contact with a pre-human subject […]. For the thickness of this red, its *haecceity*, the power that it has of filling me and of reaching me, comes from the fact that it solicits and obtains a certain vibration from my gaze (Merleau Ponty 2012:477).

The perception of the meaning of gestures, like the perception of colour, is also, in Merleau-Ponty's view, direct. In the example of gestures shared with his friend, Paul, Merleau-Ponty describes an unmediated type of relation within which there are semiotic resources such as gestures, 'I do not perceive the anger or the threat as a psychological fact hidden behind the gesture, I read the anger in the gesture. The gesture does not *make me think* of anger, it is the anger itself' (2012:190). The sign and the signified are returned to with multi-modality (2.3.2). Merleau-Ponty contextualises perception and reasons that, since people are in the world and interpret others, then they are 'condemned to meaning' (2012, xix). Even reflex gestures emerge as part of a relation in an inter- subjective context with regard to cultural, geographical and personal circumstances. Here the perception of multi-modality lies within phenomenology (see Figure 2.1.). Gearing into the other

(Merleau-Ponty 2012) indicates relation and the perception of relation as embodied. The concept parallels Buber (1970) and Husserl (1989). The experience can be understood multi-modally (Gibson 2000).

2.3.2 Embodiment, multi-modality, social semiotics and relating to the other

Relating and communicating with the body stands within the embodied concept of the person (Merleau-Ponty 2012:84). People also may perceive that an object they relate to with their bodies may be manipulated by others (Merleau-Ponty 2012:84). Bateson (2000) sees the relationship between the act and context as mutual, each creating the other. The act or sign is not cut out from the context where the bodies are (Goffman 1964:164).

For all Merleau-Ponty is criticised by himself (1968) and by others (Derrida 2005) for separating the mind and the body, he does describe knowing and being part of experiences with the body, 'I am not the spectator of it, I am a part of it' (2012:317). Derrida (2005) and Wylie (2009) caution that co-presence or coincidence could become a goal or be referred to as a source within phenomenological analyses, yet these states may not always be assumed (see also non-present others in 2.2.4). Wylie incorporates the notion of absence opening up phenomenology to the experience of the abstract imagination entwining with presence so it becomes an embodied experience of the present and the absent. Sartre (1957) made a phenomenological description of the absence of his friend, Pierre (41), in which he is relating to the non-present person. Bearing in mind these critiques and Merleau-Ponty and Buber's assumptions of co-presence, up to this point the haptic and visual aspects of phenomenological epistemology have been emphasised.

Chalmers (1996) conceptualises the phenomenal mind as distinct from, but not separate from the psychological mind. Aspects of this mind functioning are accessible in expressions and responses of people. In embodied and multi-modal research making meaning using the body can be seen through modes such as gestures. A mode is understood as a 'channel' of representation or communication and in certain contexts spoken language could no longer be thought of as the primary mode of communication (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001). More than signs that accompany vocalisations, modes such as gestures, gaze touch, posture, position and

manipulation of objects, are communicative in and of themselves (Goodwin 2016). People can make sense of each other directly through their bodies. McNeil's theorising of hand and mind (1992) is congruent with Merleau-Ponty's (2012) perception that action and meaning could fuse. Gestures could be made and received directly as thought. McNeil proposes, 'gestures are the person's memories and thoughts rendered visible' (1992:12). Gestures may express knowledge that is not expressed in speech according to Goldin-Meadow (2003:57). Furthermore, 'Speakers can reveal in gesture information that they may not know they have' (55).

The use of modes may indicate *I-You* relations. Kendon (1990) analyses people's positions relative to each other, and introduces the term 'F-formation [F as in *facing-formation*]' for the small space, 'created by two or more participants facing each other or jointly direct attention to an object or event. They cooperate with modes to sustain their shared space' (Kendon 1990:211). It is a dialogical accomplishment. People compensate for each other's changes as long as the working consensus about the interaction prevails (Goffman 1963). A proxemic configuration could be seen as inter-subjective, providing for the potential understanding of the other. Noland (2009) suggests movements and the awareness of oneself support an embodied inter-subjectivity. Gaze is theorised for relatedness, for example 'gaze gearing into the visible world' (Merleau Ponty 2012:367), or Goffman (1963) on the direction of gaze and mutual gaze to establish a direct link in the 'eye-to-eye ecological huddle' (1963:95). For Kendon (1990), 'To receive his gaze is to receive an indication that one is being taken account of' (88). Kendon also scales the intensity of smiling (1990:78) as 'a symmetrically reciprocated emotional response' (79).

Halliday (1978) introduced meta-functions present in a mode to take account of types of modes within modes, differentiating three functions of gaze: analytic, interpersonal and expressive. Norris (2004) refers to the use of a mode as potentially having semantic and pragmatic means for the self and for the other. When a person semantically marks the end of an action it may facilitate the organisation of actions in the his or her own mind. Pragmatically, the person emphasises the imminent shift in action and communicates it to the other participants (Norris 2004:88). Ruesch and Bateson consider such choices in perception/attention to be the defining element in communicating decisions,

> any action constitutes a message to ourselves as well as to others. Within the framework of communication, the expression and transmission of values – that is actions denoting a choice – occupy a central place. A value conveys not only information about the choice made, but also relays information about the things that could have been chosen but were not selected (1968:34).

Modes may occur in 'integrated ensembles' and 'complex orchestrations' (Kendon 2009:363). They are increasingly theorised within complex systems. The term multimodal communication builds on semiotic analysis of texts, images and objects (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001; Norris 2004, and see section 4.1.5). Streeck, Goodwin and LeBaron (2011) see that in combining semiotic resources they elaborate and highlight each other into a whole that surpasses each constituent part. Kendon (1990) proposes that synchronisation of modes is important because, 'To *move* with another is to show that one is "with" him in one's attention and expectancies […] signal that they are *"open"* to one another (114), although they may move in a different fashion. The coordination of modes may indicate an *I-You* relation.

2.3.3 Summary of phenomenology, embodiment and multimodality

Dialogical theories continue to be strongly substantiated through empirical approaches such as multi-modal research (Linell 2009:8). For Duranti (2010) the role of theory here is to decide 'whether we *should* distinguish among different ways or levels of being together. The empirical issue is whether we *can* distinguish' (13) (author's emphasis). I am asserting that one *should* try to discern the qualities of relating with the other at the level of quotidian dialogue for the situated study of children's decisions in relation with others.

Dialogical meta-theory can underpin inter-subjective interpretation of decisions including interpretation of the phenomenal mind in expressions and responses. These are multi-modal dynamic relations afforded with objects and the environment. I acknowledge situated, embodied presence, also in movement. Relation and therefore decisions made with dialogical agency, can operate through co-presence, and also perhaps through absence. Non-present others can be related to through the imagination and through mediating artefacts. Multi-modal meaning can be perceived within phenomenology, and within dialogism. The use of modes could indicate *I-You* relations, as well being seen as signifiers in *I-It* attitudes.

2.4 Agency and attention

2.4.1 Agency and attention

In a decision the person could have done otherwise and therefore the decision-making process proceeds along a path that is intended, whatever the eventual outcome. Intentionality is part of dialogical agency in the decision-making process and a part of relatedness. For Donaldson a sense of novel purpose defines humans as 'prolific intention generators' from an early age (1992:7) and may not be removed from accounts of human behaviour. That it is always a good thing is disputed, for example, by Bateson (2000:160). He challenges our tendency to hold purpose and instrumentality in high regard. The key point is not to assume a value. Wood (2014) problematises free choice in pre-schools. She considers agency from a post-structural perspective emphasizing power as both fluid and central to children's lives. She cautions that children experience and exercise agency differently. Donaldson (1992) also argues for more discernment of the value-base of the choices. The nature of the relation in dialogue is not without value (Linell 2009). Fundamentally a decision made in an *I-You* relation is based on a value, a regard for the other and not on a calculation of the other's instrumental worth (Buber 1970). Why one has the values with which decisions are made and the extent to which decisions are one's own would be questions to address if this study were about causality.

I start from a position in which children have some capacity in decision-making. They *could* choose from options (Frankfurt 1969; Shepherd 2015). In the Cogito Model (Doyle 2011) decisions are based on previous experience of will, particularly in recent experiences. Where those recent experiences offer very similar alternatives the person may choose randomly among these alternatives at the moment of decision, involving what Doyle calls 'undetermined liberties' (2011:194). From a more circumspect position even Eagleman concedes 'the principle of sufficient automatism' (2011:170-171). Awareness may be even within very limited time frames (Stern 2004), and the possibilities for voluntary action seem to be small, but they are extant and significant. The definition of decision (Chapter One) allows for alternatives. Decisions are the exercise of some control (Shepherd 2015). The necessary awareness and control to make decisions could be conceived of as a process (Lamb 1965) of paying attention, forming an intention and then making a commitment to a course of action. A decision, then, is a sequence rather than only

one point. Stages occur in other models of decision-making. Dennett's (1981) model is similar to Lamb's (1965): firstly awareness of alternative possibilities; secondly evaluation of those alternatives; and then a decision. In other words a person could have done otherwise.

Strawson (1962) changes the discussion from incompleteness of awareness and will, to the *importance* of the awareness. Gergen (2007) too re-prioritises relation as an alternative to the dichotomy of free-will versus determinism. For Gergen human action is within a 'relational confluence' (2009), a continuous relational flow like a dance from which the dancers are inseparable. Co-action forms the process for all meaningful action including decision-making (37). The concept of co-action draws on Shotter (1980) who emphasises shared intentionality and dialogically structured relations. Dialogical theory allows for the agency of the individual, yet dialogical agency takes a second-person interdependent stance (Linell 2009). Gergen (2009) conceives of a seamless multimodal co-ordination of bodies, including words, movements and facial expressions, each as the threads in a cloth, and the 'meaning is always in motion' (41) and evolving within an ecology rippling from local to wider circles, 'ultimately to the world at large' (46). There is a parallel here with Buber's intimate direct *I-You* mutuality of relations in meetings and encounters ranging to the *I-Thou* relations with the numinous. Buber (1970) and Malaguzzi (1994) align with Moss (2013) on the concept of *bildung* as the construction, with agency, of knowledge and society 'through relationships to the world' (Moss 2013:29). The adult's role is to respond utilising this understanding within the immediate constructive processes, 'our task is to help children communicate with the world' (Rinaldi speaking in Fasano 2002). Deciding in the world fuses the agency of actors within the world.

Ingold (2011a) disputes the extent of knowing before a move. He contends that 'people's knowledge of the environment undergoes continuous formation in the very course of their moving about in it […] we know as we go not *before* we go' (230). In decisions to make one's way ('wayfaring' in Ingold's terminology), meaning is drawn from the communicative context, the lifeworld. Searle (1983) also theorises an embodied intentionality within processes. Some subsidiary actions may be intentional without prior intention, for example changing gear when driving to the

office. 'All intentional actions have intentions in action, but not all intentional actions have prior intention' (Searle 1983:85). Norris (2004, 2011) reads embodied interactions using multi-modality and demonstrates chains of lower actions (see also Trevarthen 1979:322), comparable to Searle's subsidiary actions, in order to perform higher actions (see 4.1.5).

Bateson (2000) and Norris (2004) dispute that all intentions could be known by the participant or the observer. Norris studies the phenomenal concept of mind, rather than intentions, drawing on Chalmers (1996:11-12), in order to theorise the experience. Norris (2004) separates concern for the *experience* of inner perceptions, thoughts and feeling from the study of the perceptions thoughts and feelings that people are *expressing* and that are observable externally. This separation acknowledges the incompleteness of expression, that expression may only partially represent what someone is experiencing, and allows for the difference between experience and expression (2004:4). Attention is manifest to some extent in the expressions and responses of the phenomenal mind. Norris considers attention in degrees of awareness, although they are often used interchangeably. The theoretical selection of the phenomenal mind does not eliminate the fact that in the world, within interactions, people make interpretations of both attention and intention. Kendon (1990) theorises differential attention. People regard certain aspects of other's actions as intentional and messages as intended. In this way they 'explore one another's interpretative perspectives. They thereby negotiate some measure of agreement before either of them needs to address to the other any explicit action' (242). His study of interactions proposes that participants use *address*, an awareness of audience, this could include an *I-You* address.

Attention plays a part in making relevance, making mutuality and frame attunement to define what is attended to (Kendon 1990) with the other. Goffman (1974) uses a metaphor for differentiation of attentional tracks. The *main-line* or *story-line track* forms the main business of the encounter (Goffman 1974:210); a *directional* track is a stream of signs, that is not in the main content of the activity, but serves to frame it; and a *disattend track* is a variety of actions not counted as part of the interaction, such as some postural readjustments. Akin to Goffman's main story-line, LaBerge (2002) details a prolonged pathway of attention and brief pathways. In Kahneman's (1973) research people are capable of dividing attention between simultaneous

stimuli and possible activities (9). They are far more flexible than bottleneck theories of attention suggest, allowing perceptual analysis of more than one stimulus at a time. The focus of attention may change from instant to instant. Attention may vary in intensity or scope as if under the spotlight (Tsal 1983) or as if perceived through a zoom lens (Eriksen and St.James 1986). The attended area may be a selection, related to the choice being made by the viewer and bring different activities into the foreground or background. Norris (2004, 2011) correlates foreground attention with the density (see 4.1.5) of attention. Norris builds on Goffman (1974) and Kendon's (1990) attentional mainline track concept of attention as the higher-level discourse structure (Norris 2011:212). Deciding what counts, defining the attentional frame, is the child's process of interpretation in situ. It would also be the vital process in adult interpretation, in understanding an observation of a decision.

2.4.2 Summary of agency and attention

For the purposes of this study, agency can be considered as something we can experience in relation with others extending to the world at large, a dialogical agency. Decisions are made within relational flow, within social processes of awareness and making meaning that are continuous. One may deliberate alternatives in a sequence of attention, forming intention and commitment to a course of action. Within each decision there may be embodied intentional actions with or without prior intention. One may be processing many prior experiences. Decisions are within chains of prior experiences. Experiences are situated embodied perceptions of others and of oneself. Decisions are made in the context of what one may be aware of in the expressions of others, which is incomplete and potentially misleading. There is no certainty in the interpretation of the children or the observers because of the large number of external and internal factors involved. One may not be aware of all the decision-making motivations or processes, but one may have phenomenal interactional awareness to some extent. Decisions are made according to what is paid attention to as relevant.

2.5 Summary of theoretical underpinning

My initial and main concern is the embodied immediate dialogue of a child with another child when making decisions and Buber's (1970) ontology addresses this exactly. It is also necessary to consider the relational world of the child together with

objects, and the environment, their community and society and maybe encompass references to the past, the absent, to imagination and to the abstract. In order to look beyond two people in relation, Buber's dyadic *I-You* relation would need to be triadic or multi-party for *I-You* to be present with the world and with another other. It also may be possible to reconsider direct *I-You* relationships in less frozen moments, in the flow of movement and action within the environment. Buber's thesis leaves me with questions about how a child may decide to move between *I-You* and *I-It* relations and how one may be able to interpret the complex occurrence. How may the child make decisions relating with non-human others, be they objects or the environment, and potentially with another child at the same time?

Dialogical meta-theory provides the broadened frame to underpin this research. It includes contextual social constructionism (Linell 2009) to generate knowledge with others, a phenomenological approach to understanding the lived experience, and multi-modality to interpret the embodied communication. Agency is conceptualised as a dialogical capacity to make decisions that can also be read multi-modally. Attention is part of the decision-making process of attention, intention and commitment to action. Intentionality cannot be proven but people will interpret it. A focus on attention allows access to aspects of the phenomenal mind (Chalmers 1996) evident in expressions and responses. They may be interpreted phenomenally and multi-modally. Subliminal perception and subliminal consciousness are of course acknowledged, but I am focusing on the relational processing that is evident rather than a causal functional psychological information-processing approach. The conceptualisation of the phenomenal mind suits a study of children making decisions while experiencing the others around them.

Chapter Three

Decisions and Relatedness in Recent Research

In this chapter I review the literature and research evidence about children's decision-making and relatedness with other children. I examine how inter-subjectivity has been used to understand interactions. Secondary and tertiary inter-subjectivity extend to include objects and other others. Finally, I review research into the decision-making processes of children.

3.1 Relatedness and inter-subjectivity

Inter-subjectivity understood as the readiness for dialogue is explained in my theoretical position (2.2.1). It is often used in research interchangeably for established dialogical states. There are different ways of understanding inter-subjectivity. In an overview of current thinking on inter-subjectivity, Reuther (2014) looks to future directions in understanding its complexity and recommends a 'multi-field approach' (1004). In this vein Gillespie and Cornish (2010) review inter-subjectivity and recognise at least six definitions in circulation from cognitive, embodied, interactional, cultural and dialogical researchers. They synthesise the fields and conceptualise inter-subjectivity as 'the variety of relations between perspectives' (2010:19-20). This inclusive definition suits the purposes of dialogical analysis. Gillespie and Cornish (2010) also contribute levels of inter-subjectivity: person A relating to person B in *direct* perspective; *meta perspective* that 'reveals the presence of multiple perspectives within an single utterance or brief exchange' (35) in which A and B are each aware that the other relates to them; and a *meta-metaperspective* in which A and B each know that the other is aware that they each know the other relates to him or herself.

3.1.1 Relating to self

Relating with others is not a completely outward-facing process. Gallese and Goldman (1998) propose that mirror neurone activity may allow direct understanding of other's decision-making by creating in the observer a matching state, 'the

understanding of basic action intentions is based on the observer's own motor knowledge' (Gallese 2009:488). In his embodied simulation model Gallese postulates not a separate, but a situated relational self. He reasons that this self 'being-in-the-world, is constitutively "open to the other"' (2009:496), connected by the relational architecture of the motor system. Clark and Dumas (2015) examine the neural basis for inter-subjectivity in peer interaction and argue that the social world and the world of the individual are interdependent. Developmental psychology places the recognition of the self and the self as s/he may appear to the other child in a mirror well before the second birthday (Reddy 1991). This means that, even if, as discussed in Chapter Two, the level of awareness people may have of themselves in making a decision is not complete, the child's ability to read the phenomenal aspects of mind, manifested by oneself as well by the other, is established. The neural correlates for inter-subjectivity are not underestimated. However, the extensive body of neuroscience about relatedness and making decisions is outside the scope of this study.

3.1.2 Relating to other people

Trevarthen's (1979) concept of *primary inter-subjectivity*, a reciprocal proto-conversation, breaks new ground in understanding how infants relate with others as protagonists in a delicately attentive dialogue, 'a dance of expressions and excitements' (1979:347). Assumptions based on egocentric and deficit theories are transformed by Trevarthen's work on how infants' 'effective interpersonal intelligence' is not acquired but is an innate capacity to relate (1998:15). This echoes Buber's view (1958). With time innate primary inter-subjectivity has been accepted as the consensus view (Stern 2000). Mutual attunement between people and the interpersonal communion of self with others have been researched extensively in neonates and infants. Stern's own work (2000, 2004) establishes the new-born's responsive states of being with another, continued by Ammaniti and Gallese (2014) (see also Trevarthen and Reddy 2007). It is significant that primary inter-subjectivity invests a child with agency to make decisions in the interactions. S/he 'knows the dance well enough, and is not just a puppet to be animated' (Trevarthen 1979:347). These are decisions in Buber's (1970) direct embodied presence.

There are arguments that relatedness increases with age, for example Göncü (1993) develops the work of Parten (1932) and Vytgosky (1978) to support the hypothesis that social play of preschoolers becomes increasingly shared from three to four and a half years of age. He uses structural features and negotiations of social play as indicators of inter-subjectivity. Bakeman and Brownlee (1980) contest an exclusively ontogenetic perspective. They understand moves into social play, not as a stage but 'sequentially in the stream of children's play behavior' (873), with the children making moment-by-moment transitions. Malaguzzi (1998) explains this as a relational expediency with peers, 'Children are willing to change their ideas […] sometimes there are moments when their goal really is to establish a good relationship' (94). Primary inter-subjectivity is not a finite phase, it remains in operation throughout life supporting other forms of inter-subjectivity (Bråten 2009). However, like *I-You* relations, it is understood to be a non-permanent state (Clark and Dumas 2015). Both Gergen (2009), with co-action and relational flow, and Trevarthen and Schögler (2007) with inter-subjectivity, see interaction as dance. Kimmel's (2009) study of inter-subjectivity is of the detailed decisions made in dance at close quarters. It is a dance of expressions and responses. In a cascade of alternative responses (102) a dancer can make a repair to communication through an amplified signal, correction, reversal and/or repetition and so sustain the dance. For Yanow and Tsoukas (2009) these re-adjustments acknowledge 'not-knowing' (18). They are improvised not pre-determined. Schon (1987) provides a link from (Buber's 1970) surprise to practice. The professional must, in Schon's view, respond with an improvised response to the unforeseen. Schon's sequence of 'reflection in action: routinized action, encounter of surprise, reflection, and new action' (1987:26-7) parallels the dance of inter-subjectivity in Kimmel's (2009) model. Decisions can be seen as steps in the dance of relatedness with other children and steps in the relatedness of the adult with the child.

Morris (2015) develops Ryan's and Deci's (2000) theory to explore how young children's relatedness to others, along with competence and autonomy are the primary foundations for their self-determination. They can decide for themselves because they relate to others. Initially shared experiences described by the concepts of communion (Stern 2000, 2004) and 'together' (Bakeman and Brownlee 1980), 'we-feeling' and togetherness (Schütz 1967; Singer and De Haan 2007) do not necessitate

complex actions. Pálmadóáttir and Einarsdóttir (2016) study one to three-year-old children in their lived experience attempting to relate with the researcher as well as each other and involve them together in play (4.2.2.2). Primary inter-subjectivity describes a world of shared experience between people that does not refer to anything outside itself, further forms of inter-subjectivity include relating to other others.

3.1.3 Broadening Inter-subjectivity into engagement with activities and the environment

Talamo and Pozzi (2011) argue practical experience and the subsequent shared understanding are the preconditions for inter-subjectivity. It is built in the reciprocal awareness of the activity. The onset of the 'social referencing' web (Campos and Sternberg 1980) occurs in infancy alongside culture, rituals, habits for acting in cooperation, 'acts of meaning' (Bruner 1990), interaction as moments of meaning-making, and 'shared agency' in action (Trevarthen 2009:12). Studies in a range of contexts theorise the peer culture of children including their activities (Corsaro 2003; Ishikawa and Hay 2006; Skånfors, Löfdahl and Hägglund 2009; Wohlwend 2009; Fabes, Martin and Hanish 2011). Piaget sees children's staged understanding of objects and the environment through their bodies 'intermingled' with inter-personal relations (Piaget 1954, pxi). Current understanding (Bråten 2009; Berk 2009; Ormrod 2015) is that these ways of interacting remain with us throughout life. So, for example young children and adults. For example young children 'choose to engage in movement for it's own sake […] for the sheer enjoyment of the sensation' (Davies 2001:46). These intermingled embodied relationships with influences, environments and objects could be seen as dialogical responses to affordances, and as decisions.

Through observations of children Trevarthen and Hubley (1978) identify *secondary inter-subjectivity* from about nine months of age. This takes the form of a triangular subject-subject-object relationship placing the child and companion in relation with the environment and objects in sympathetic intention. Each child uses 'other centred' or altercentric participation (Bråten 1998; Stern 2004) in the object orientations of the other. It operates through their attention, movements and manipulations. For Bråten (2009) this moves beyond joint attention to an object. Argaman (2015) sees non-verbal semiotic resources used with humour to indicate

confrontation and re-quilibrium in classroom relations. Inter-subjectivity, as Buber (1970)'s *I-You* relation, can be dissensual. According to Shantz and Hartup (1992) allowing for dissensus is critical for understanding children's development and they too call upon a dance metaphor, the ''dance' of discord, of disaffirmation and affirmation' (11). Goodwin, Goodwin, and Yaeger-Dror's (2002) study of embodied interaction includes how dispute and disagreement is constructed in hopscotch games. Openness also to the differences of the other is found in Meacham's (2016) study of four to five-year-old children's dialogue about making sound with a cello in which children continue peer interaction to understand and test conflicting ideas. The triangular relationships, child-child-object, of secondary inter-subjectivity align with the triadic dialogical models in section 2.2.2. Up to this point what the literature does not reveal is decisions made within a more extensive contextual social constructionism model of relations (Linell 2009). Taking account of context is considered next.

3.1.4 Objects and the environment as reciprocal agents

Waters and Bateman (2015) consider the role of the environment outdoors in the establishment of inter-subjectivity in children aged four to seven years. Through conversation analysis they find that the outside locality and objects in it stimulate and afford a greater number of child-initiated interactions of 'successful inter-subjectivity' (266) in sustained shared thinking than indoors. Interpreting these episodes Waters and Bateman (2015) draw on Heritage (1978, 1984) and Bateman (2011) to explain how the children demonstrate inter-subjectivity as they select features and aspects of 'spatial affordances' that interested them. They decide what is significant through their interaction and 'talk their environment into being' (2015:271). In Bateman (2011) certain playground huts are treated as desirable territory. It is not the hut that decides to be desirable, it is the play, and the hut affords a perimeter between who is included and who is excluded from the group.

Scholarship and practice is extending thinking about agency in secondary inter-subjectivity in early childhood education. This echoes the acknowledged importance of the environment that is prevalent in ideas of quality in early years education (Harms, Clifford, and Cryer 2003). Dalli *et al.* (2011) refer to socio-cultural research on what constitutes quality early childhood education. They include provision that

enables children under two years of age 'to exercise effect on the world through the expression of mind and body in reciprocal acts' (2011:73). Moreover this agency makes inter-subjectivity possible. In Reggio Emilia the environment is seen as an agentive protagonist that will 'promote choices and activity' (Malaguzzi cited in Edwards, Gandini, and Forman 1998:177) within an on-going relationship. Experiences are represented 'in a sort of physical performance with child and material in dialogue together' (Vecchi 2010:33). The Reggio Approach to learning actively develops dynamic dialogical relationships with objects and spaces (Vecchi cited in Edwards, Gandini and Forman 1998:166). The open attitude, as for Duranti (2010) and Buber (1970), is the condition for the dialogue to take place, 'The process of relating to a place to '*listen'* to the places and form a relationship with the space, the light, the silences and sounds, the people who inhabit or just pass through them' (Filippini and Vecchi 2008:8) (authors's emphasis).

Taylor, Pacini-Ketchabaw and Blaise (2012) highlight children's relations to the 'more–than-human' in a review of international literature and call for still greater advances to be made by early childhood scholars to emphasise ecological inter-dependence and retheorise human/nonhuman agencies. Malone (2016) considers child-body-animal-place relations in Bolivia through participatory, new materialist and post-humanist approaches. Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kind, and Kocher (2016) make another contribution, shifting to perceptions of materials as events instead of objects and considering them to be joint participants engaging in the world. In Olsson's (2009) thinking objects and the environment are also regarded as reciprocal agents. This is based on project work with two-year-old children who produce knowledge in dialogue with light, shadows and sounds.

Lenz-Taguchi (2010) analyses the documentation of dyads of one-year-olds' encounters with water, space, matter and objects in terms of 'the agency of the material reality that we are unavoidably connected to and constantly intra-acting with' (84). The findings reveal the capacity of infants and peers seeking inter-subjective relationships to advance 'dialogic spaces' through their interactions. Lenz-Taguchi (2010) draws particularly on Barad (2007) to challenge the divide between discourse and matter. Lenz-Taguchi extends relationships to include materials as active and what Barad terms *performative* agents in *intra-action*. Sticks, water and

clay may have agency and play a part in an intra-active relationship between humans, non-humans and the environment. Children could have a dialogue with how the environment sounds, for example, bridging the material and immaterial world.

The Reggio Emilia Approach presents the child in 'dialogues with places' (Filippini and Vecchi 2008) including the subtleties of their sounds, resonances, disintegration and spaces. In Reggio the child is conceptualised in relation with others, with context, present and non-present, 'with peers, adults, ideas and objects as well as both real and imaginary events of a communicative world' (Malaguzzi 1994)(online). Through an encounter with a place children may create a relationship and dialogue with it as part of a 'culture of environment' (Vecchi 2010:95). An influence on the Reggio Approach to dialogue that includes the environment is the anthropology of architecture (Filippini 2015). The understanding of Hall (1990) in particular is significant. He sees mankind with a new and hidden cultural dimension and that they together 'constitute one interrelated system' (88).

For example, in the Reggio project 'Dialogues with Materials' (Reggio Children 2011) my video work documents three-year-old children encountering paper napkins normally overlooked in everyday use at the lunch table,

> A napkin removed from invisibility and made the protagonist of attentions and reflections. […] As hands, brain, sensations, and material got to know each other, the children's gestures constructed the first forms. […] Combinations, alliances, dialogues of materials' (Vecchi and Giudici 2004, p.27).

The children fold, roll, tear, crush, smooth and choose a background for the transformed napkins from shades and thicknesses of white, grey or black. They explain their choices in terms of responses to the propositions of the napkin, 'I've put it on white because he (the napkin) wanted white' (Scuola Diana 2001:14).

> Is giving a voice to the objects, animating them just evidence of immaturity? Or can we also consider it as a form of sensibility in the children, capable of projecting themselves into the other, even if it is only an object? (Scuola Diana 2001:14-15).

The sensibility of perception and relation allowed for in the Reggio approach inherently involves awareness of others, and making decisions with many capacities, 'a perception of reality in front of which somehow arises a sort of dialectical alliance' (Hoyuelos 2013:188).

Dahlberg and Dahlberg (2003) regard a perceptual dialogue between the perceiver and the perceived object as a dynamic relationship, made up by both subject and object. For Piaget (1929) the young child does not differentiate between self and the external world. He reports that a form of animism (169) persists even in eight-year-old children who attribute awareness to things to different degrees according to their movements. Pramling (2006) reinterprets Piaget's (1929) interviews with children and finds they are communicating about the world 'as if' elements of it, such as the sun, are aware. Pramling suggests this is partly because they are using metaphorical conventions and therefore recognising the cultural norms, such as the sun knowing when to set. According to Piaget (1929) the children are making reality claims, whereas in Pramling's (2006) view, the children are making aspects of their world relevant. The concept of metaphorical extensions of dialogue (Linell 2009) could apply here.

3.1.5 Tertiary inter-subjectivity and knowing others

Secondary inter-subjectivity continues alongside the onset of *tertiary inter-subjectivity* from about 18 to 24 months as predication and verbal communication emerge. Bråten (2009:58) and Trevarthen (Bråten and Trevarthen 2007) describe an additional *second-order layer* of tertiary inter-subjectivity establishing mind-reading of the other partner from when the child is three to six years of age. Trevarthen refutes that brain theory explains the 'felt immediacy' to others' lived experience (2009) and argues the intrinsic inter-subjective sympathetic capacities of children are *atheoretical* and precede any explanation of development according to theory of mind. The explanation of what happens taking awareness of the other to build theories and attribute mental states to others in the frame of 'Theory of Mind' (TOM)(Whiten 1991) is beyond this study. It is also a contested field of research in philosophical psychology and developmental psychology (Doherty 2009; Leudar and Costall 2009). Other cultures may not view inter-subjectivity as mind-reading. In ethnography, particularly in the Pacific (Rumsey and Robbins 2008) studies argue against the possibility of knowing what is in the mind of another person (like Bateson 2000). In any case in neuroscience Gallese (2009) allows, 'the same actions performed by others in different contexts can lead the observer to radically different interpretations' (496). The research evidence on TOM also raises the question of how one can know the minds of research subjects without interaction or other means of

making the knowledge of the person personal**?** There is a further rationale here for recognising the situated nature of interactions. TOM represents the mind divided from the body. Here, then is an edge of this thesis study. At this edge a few particulars of TOM findings are noted with relevance to this study. Children are seen to share intentions and outcomes through paying attention to each other's attention and expressions before they verbalize TOM (Reddy, Hay, Murray and Trevarthen 1997; Meltzof 2005). This relates to the attention phase of decision-making. Recent work on TOM (Saracho 2014), extends beyond speech-based traditional false belief tasks to include non-verbal indicators in children from 15 months of age and their ability to understand the desires, thoughts and perceptions of others. Buttelmann, Over, Carpenter and Tomasello (2014) study how 18 month-old children make decisions to help others in a task opening boxes. The understanding of reading others' attention and attributing intention has shifted to younger children and is beginning to be understood through embodied experience.

3.1.6 *Relatedness summary*

Inter-subjectivity has been studied taking account of context and levels of inter-subjectivity. Such studies advance the acknowledgement of dialogue with some consideration of agency. What remains to be studied is how children make decisions through dialogical agency in and with the world. The literature on decision-making is considered next.

3.2 Decision-making

For many decades decision-making has been studied in psychology in isolated situations such as gambling (Payne, Bettman and Johnson 1992). Work on economic, political and biological decisions, such as game theory include prior experience and cooperation as well as competition. Most of this research is about decisions based on the expected utility of outcomes (Leonard 2010). There are instances of more situated and relational studies. There is a rise in the study of decisions situated in experience in naturalistic settings (Lipshitz, Klein, Orasanu, and Salas 2001). Consideration of the relation between prior experience and decision-making is also increasing to take count of recurrent experiences and routines of decision-making (Betsch and Haberstroh 2014). Of course there are exceptions from different stances. Keen (1975) makes a phenomenological interpretation of his five-year-old daughter's

decision to come home rather than stay at a friend's house. Von Eckartsberg (1986) clarifies that as a phenomenologist Keen is looking at *how* his daughter's perceived experience, rather than looking for *why*, the causality (129).

The actions and expressions of two-year-old children are performed and observable aspects of their decision-making. 'They move and experience with a sense of time corresponding to that which governs the agency and awareness of adults' (Trevarthen 2009:14). Where there is awareness there can be decisions within decisions to fine-tune an interaction. Trevarthen (1979) finds there is potential for small voluntary decisions to be made, adjustments, with larger-scale purposes in mind (322, and see 2.4.1). The capacity for purposefulness begins before the age of nine months when children are expressing motives, sharing them with others and seeking to understand the other's purposes (Aitken and Trevarthen 1997).

Sairanen and Kumpulainen (2014) find children's relational sense of agency is constructed in interaction with the socio-cultural context and is significant for transitions, in this case to primary school at the age of six. The relational agency of the practitioner engaging with others is part of the culture (Edwards 2007). Rainio (2010) also adopts a socio-cultural view that agency is situated. In adult-child interactions in socio-dramatic play with seven-year-olds Rainio (2010) sees children struggle to develop and enact agency and have it recognised. Rainio sees agency not as a fixed attribute. It shifts in relation to context. (Rainio 2010:11). In Edwards and D'Arcy's (2004) view relational agency tends to expand activities. The children themselves are not fixed, they are *becoming* (Prout 2005:143–144) and yet are recognised as agentive beings in their own right (Prout 2005; Dahlberg, Moss and Pence 2007). For Rainio (2010) agency takes many forms: resisting and transforming power relations (see also Wood 2014); becoming part of a group; and transforming oneself or transforming the object of activity. Imagination and the creation of different realities are of central importance, 'agency cannot be reduced only to visible, active and productive action in the material world' (Rainio 2010:16).

3.2.1 Task-based research on decisions

There is not a substantial literature for decision-making showing agency in two-year-old children whose main communication is not yet spoken. This may be because speech has been used as an important indicator of intentions. Research on children's decisions is predominantly through adult-devised tasks, and is frequently evaluated using a deficit-model with success and fail criteria in non-naturalistic settings (Mann 1973; Suddendorf and Busby 2005; Crone and Van Der Molen 2007; Wainman, Boulton-Lewis, Walker, Brownlee, Cobb, Whiteford, and Johnsson 2012). Non-verbal processes are acknowledged in Gerson, Bekkering, and Hunnius (2016) who indicate that 19 month-old children identify choices through actions by comparing themselves with similar actions of puppets. Most research on decisions is based on older children, typically six to eight years of age, playing strategic games (Castelli, Massaro, Bicchieri, Chavez and Marchetti 2014; O'Connor, McCormack and Feeney 2014; Raijmakers, Mandell, van Es and Counihan 2014). Wong and Nunes (2014) direct four and five-year-olds to make decisions about allocating resources. They find in home contexts children consider the other children's effort more than has been understood in previous research, whereas in educational settings equality rather than equity governs decisions about the distribution. What is interesting about this study is the recognition of context and experience of the other, more than the causes for their decisions. It also allows for some child-initiated experiences.

3.2.2 Decisions in early childhood settings

In naturalistic settings High Scope documents the long-term benefits of working with children's ability to initiate and plan when given the scope for their agency to take place in a systematic way (Epstein and Schweinhart 2009). Markström and Halldén (2009) aim to look from a child's perspective at children's strategies for agency in preschool and see them actively constructing the social order. Within the prescribed choices of predefined rooms and activities children explore the gaps to create time and space for themselves. They devise alternative uses for things, strategies of negotiation and avoidance. This is interpreted as children making choices in order to maintain their autonomy and integrity. Silverman, Baker, and Keogh (1998) call this 'interactional competence'. Wood (2014) considers the children's choices when they move around a setting as possibly intentional, or possibly 'opportunistic' (13), although these can be seen as a matter of degree in the free will versus determinism debate (see 2.4.1). She represents what choice means to three and four-year-old

children in terms of control and resistance to children and adults. Wood situates choices within shifting power structures and relationships that affirm group and individual agency. Through the repertoires of choice deployed by the children some benefit more than others and a significant finding is that practitioners need to be aware of *how* the choices take place and the contingent issues of agency, power and control.

Reunamo (2007) seeks kindergarden children's views about their settings through observation and interviews and finds agency produces environmental change. Significantly, the children's perception of agency also has an agentive property 'in and of itself' (371). Murray's (2016) work with four to eight-year-old children as researchers found they base decisions on evidence with a range of research behaviours. The findings are presented in epistemological building blocks, in one of which, the social domain, the children value peer perspectives, and in another, autonomy, they enact their personal preferences in making their decisions (715). Waermö's (2016) analysis of hide-and-seek play finds lower order decisions serve higher-order ones (2.4.1). It indicates that ten and eleven-year-olds embed relational agency collectively in negotiating rules. They broaden the collective interpretation of rules and make micro-adjustments in their courses of action in order to align them and change the circumstances in play. The agency, as in Rainio (2010), is contextual. Choice and willing participation are key elements in play (Else 2014). For Else choice is also existential and the sense of aliveness and presence in play and social interaction are not separate.

3.2.3. The role of the adult in decision-making

The understanding of inter-subjectivity and decision-making is also present in thinking on relational pedagogies (Dalli *et al.* 2011). White (2016) emphasises the importance of gaze in early childhood education as an opportunity to engage with the child as a relational other in dialogue and mutual discovery. White calls for greater awareness of the orientations of one's 'I's in seeing (485), perceiving oneself and how the other may be perceiving. Graham and Fitzgerald (2010) combine the agency of children with the self-understanding of adults in a dialogical approach that acknowledges mutuality and the recognition that the children's participation is not separate. Further examples are the pedagogy of friendship (Carter and Nutbrown 2016), dialogical pedagogy (Matusov and Miyazaki 2014), and pedagogy in Reggio

Emilia (Malaguzzi 1993). Here the focus on interactions is 'relational and systemic because it is capable of seeing relationships rather than related terms […] capable of generating itself in a constant relationship with the world' (Hoyuelos 2013:334). Taking this stance, decisions are not seen as separate from relationships. A secure understanding of agency is not only part of assessment. It is enacted in relational pedagogy and demonstrated in the dance of practice (Edwards 2007).

Reciprocity and relationship underpin socio-cultural pedagogy that promotes agency to make decisions, for example in enabling environments in the UK (Early Education 2012) and in practice in New Zealand, Finland, and Reggio Emilia among others (Malaguzzi 1998; Reunamo 2007; Rockel 2010; Cagliari *et al.* 2016). In Reggio, the working hypothesis is that inter-subjective adult dialogue heightens awareness of and attunement in the proposals made to children (Rubizzi 2001:94). How practitioners plan for a balance between accommodation and assimilation, and also adaptation and agency for example in the *river* pedagogical tool outlined by Reunamo (2007:375) may provide for responsiveness to opportunities in the children's experiences.

Collaborative learning is measured along dimensions of equality and mutuality. Equality is measured in sharing control and interactive turn-taking. According to Clark and Dumas mutuality means, 'the extent of *engagement* between each other's contributions so that peers who exhibit a high level of mutuality assist each other by sharing ideas and giving feedback' (2015:4) (authors' emphasis). In the absence of adult influence such as modelling Clark and Dumas (2015) do not expect mutuality to occur automatically. Côté-Lecaldare, Joussemet and Dufour (2016) consider the adult role to actively promote choice in toddlers and emphasise traditional forms of autonomy support (offering choices and encouraging initiatives). They also advocate widening the scope for training and structure in settings. One such model is Whitebread, Coltman, Pasternak, Sangster, Grau, Bingham, Almeqdad, and Demetriou's (2009) observational tool model devised for assessing independent agency. Hudson (2012) discusses early childhood practitioners' views on what decision-making is in age relevant terms, 'Practitioners place themselves as pivotal to children's ability to learn how to make decisions […] rather than the child's existing and autonomous capacity to do this' (2012:5). Yet, in de Groot Kim's study (2005),

independent access to socio-dramatic play is considered to be the impetus for a three-year-old to make choices for the first time once alone after months in a setting constantly with an assistant for Special Educational Needs. Robson (2016) found four-year-old children were significantly more likely to show evidence of self-regulation when adults were absent (see also Rainio 2010). In a dialogical study with children under two, Redder (2014) finds the space maintained by the adult is important for future interactions. The adult could restrain infant-peer inter-subjective dialogue and this would potentially alter how infants relate to peers in subsequent interactions. Alternatively, and supporting Hudson's (2012) claim, the teachers are found to have a connecting and key role opening up dialogical spaces for infants and their peer partners (see also Payler 2007). The role of adult control is reconciled with children's freedom of choice by Tzuo (2007) proposing an 'active' definition of freedom to participate rather than a freedom from any constraint of choice. Sleap and Sener (2013) are cautious in their expectations of a dialogical pedagogy, 'If, as dialogue practitioners, we aspire to facilitate genuine dialogue as Buber understands it, the best we can do is to put in place conditions that we think will be favourable to it, and hope' (60).

Decision-making is an existential and an educational goal for children cognitively, socially and in their identity as protagonists (Malaguzzi 1994). Children have the right under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations General Assembly 1989) to be engaged and participate in decisions that affect their lives. Harcourt and Keen (2012) propose a shift from engagement perceived as an internal state (such as enthusiasm and sense of wonder) towards the teacher 'clearly identifying what engagement might be as an *experienced activity*' (2012:75). They point out that the observer's perceived engagement may be quite different from the child's experience. The role of the adult also includes accessing the stand-point of the child's perspective through mediums, themselves of the child's choosing, including orally and in drawings (UNCRC Article 13). The communicative modes may help access how the child engages in decisions. This thesis acknowledges but does not centre on the practitioners' role in shaping or enabling the decisions in interactions. The implications for the shift in practitioner perceptions and the extent of their role will be considered in Chapter Ten.

3.2.4. Decisions with others

There is a growing interest in interaction in studies of decision-making. In their review of neuroscientific evidence on the social construction of intrinsic motivation, Clark and Dumas (2015) argue that decisions are made in interactions, between children. Bahrami, Olsen, Latham, Roepstorff, Rees, and Frith (2010) find the ability of dyads to make more accurate decisions than either actor in their study of the mechanisms underlying the 'two-heads-better-than-one' effect (2HBT1). Up until recent years most experimental studies on social decision-making have involved isolated individuals with simulated or hidden actors competing over resources. There are now calls for a shift to consider collective decision-making interacting towards a common goal (Bang, Fusaroli, Tylén, Olsen, Latham, Lau, Roepstorff, Rees, Frith, and Bahrami 2014) and acknowledging collaboration rather than competition (Bahrami 2012).

3.3 Summary of decisions in relation

The empirical research evidence establishes that by two years of age children have recognisable capacities to make decisions taking *some* observable account of others, whatever their knowledge of their own and others' own intentions. They enter into dialogue with objects and their environment and into inter-subjective dialogue with their peers. There are arguments that the dialogue with the environment is reciprocal if not inter-subjective. Research into theories of mind is currently extending into this age group and may become more relevant in time. Decision-making is increasingly understood as a social process. Like Rainio's study of agency situated in the flow of inter-relation I also recognise it cannot be fixed to grasp and understand (2010:94). I add to Murray's (2016) conclusion that agency is a construction of knowledge, by asserting that dialogical agency is constructed knowing through relations. I also align with Wood (2014) in my focus on *how* choices are made. I differ from Rainio (2010) Wood (2014) and Murray (2016) through studying younger children's decision-making within a different theoretical framework and involving a participatory methodology. The extent of adult intervention and control in this chapter's review of the research literature positions my study of two-year-olds making child-initiated decisions in interactions with others in naturalistic settings, interpreted by parents and practitioners, in a space of its own. This space contains many unknown factors that may continue to be unknown, and yet there is

the potential to reach some new understanding of how children's decisions were made with dialogical agency.

Chapter Four

How Decision-making in Two-Year-olds in Dialogue may be Observed and Understood

In this chapter I explain the participatory approach framed within a case-study. Knowledge was generated through layers in the interpretivism and contextual social constructionism stance (outlined in 2.2.2). Figure 2.1 shows how the nested theoretical lenses relate to each other. I employed visual, phenomenological and multi-modal interpretative methods to access the process of decision-making evident in the children's interactions, and to recognise the children's agency. Video provided particular attributes to research the lived experience of decision-making in the world, such as movement and the representation of time. The children's parents (Hannah, Darren, Anne and Rachel) and the practitioners (Sarah and Jo) interpreted the decision-making experiences of three focus children (Oscar, Tia and Henry) over the course of a year. I address the role of the observer, and the crucial quality of relational ethics both in the observation and the analysis stages. The choice of methods is re-considered and critiqued. I aimed to bring the rich interpretative potential of those people who know a child best together with these ways of observing and interpreting.

4.1 Methodological Approach

4.1.1 The case study approach

A case study is 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within its real-world context' (Yin 2014:16). It is an all-encompassing approach that comprises six elements: the plan, design, preparation, data collection, analysis and reporting in a 'linear but iterative process' (Yin 2014: xxii). A case study was an appropriate conceptual design for answering a how-type question about situated lived experiences. The children's agency was contextualised in daily life, within which the children were evolving and adapting (Kesby 2007). Looking at expressions and responses of the children was an undertaking in *thick description* as Geertz (1973) maintains, within a semiotic concept of culture, 'The thing to ask is what their import is: what it is […] that in their occurrence and through

their agency, is getting said' (Geertz 1973:10). Case study does not require control over behavioural events and so suits the choice of observing interactions in the social world (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Campbell cautions against any assumption of objectivity in this approach, 'But it is all that we have. It is the only route to knowledge' (1975:191). There are other routes to different kinds of knowledge, however to know about the lived and situated decisions of these children it is necessary to focus on these cases.

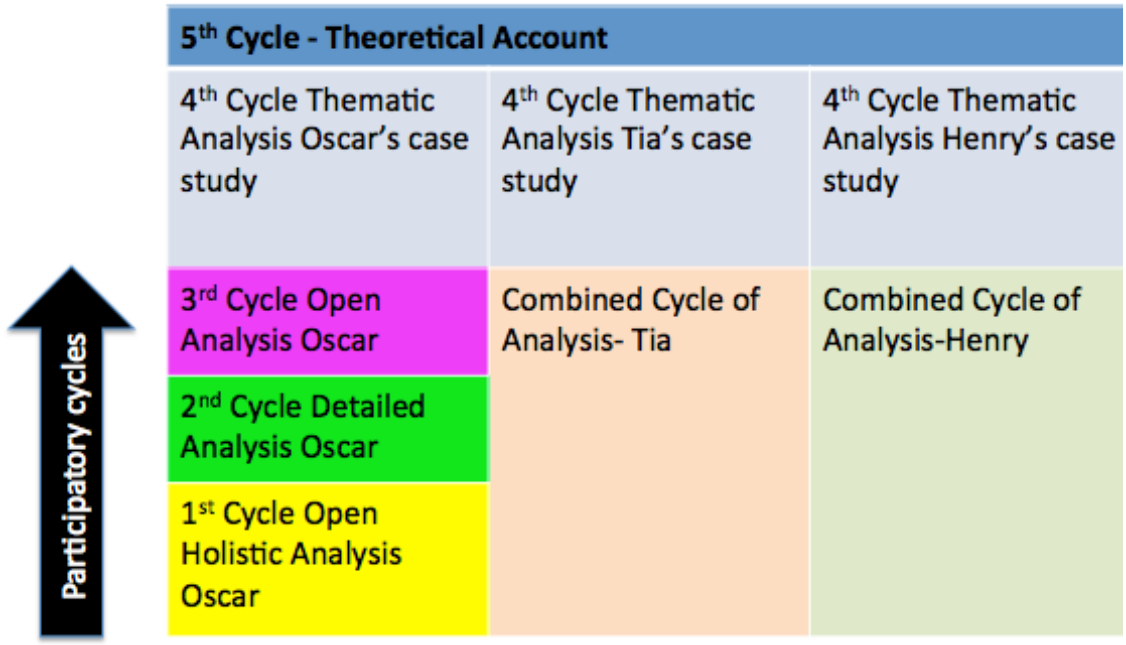


Figure 4.1 The analytic cycles for the case studies

The cases were one principal case study and two minor ones each of a child between the age of two and three. The principal focus child was Oscar. The other two children were Tia and Henry[2]. They were interpreted by their parents and practitioners in participatory cycles of analysis (see Figure 4.1) for each set of participants.

4.1.2 Participatory approach

The rationale for a participatory approach was the selection of an entire approach to research (Kindon, Pain, and Kesby 2007) consonant with valuing the knowledge of the child situated within the child's community (Malaguzzi 1986; EECERA 2014). Inherent mutuality rendered it more than a method. It was 'an epistemology and an attitude' (Krai 2014:148). As such it was integral to the research aims to develop the process of observing and understanding two-year-olds' decision-making from within

[2] All the children's names are pseudonyms.

dialogue. In order to research *with* people not *on* them (Heron and Reason 2001) within a social constructionist perspective (Linell 2009), parents and staff took a participatory role in meaning making 'concerned with developing practical knowing' (Reason and Bradbury 2008:4). The participatory approach derives from ethnography (see section 4.1.5), and pays attention to the values and knowledge of the researched. This study also used multi-modality. Not all multimodal researchers are familiar with who makes the texts they analyse, and the familiarity with the perspectives of the participants positions this thesis at the intersection between multi-modality and ethnography (Dicks, Flewitt, Lancaster and Pahl 2011). The study of decision-making in young children who are developing expression and communication was, necessarily, interpretative.

Gillespie and Cornish (2010) acknowledge the difficulty in interpreting implicit meanings and how observation of non-verbal action can provide insights. They stress two factors: clarity about whose perspective is being interpreted; and width of perspective (38). Participatory analysis helped to provide this width and multi-modality and phenomenology the clarity about perspective. According to Dahlberg and Dahlberg (2003), the multiplicity and ambiguity of the lifeworld are not easily grasped and clearly understood because each of us may understand differently (35). The inherent challenges in the process of interpretation confirm the importance of having open expectations (Schwandt 1999). Parents' and practitioners' understanding was knowing and *not* knowing (McManus 2007) while remaining willing to engage in dialogue to make the best accounts possible. Interpreting with others rose to the challenge of Wells (2012), 'to keep our ideas and analyses 'at the temperature of their own destruction' (135). Dahlberg and Dahlberg (2003) urge '*that we don't make definite what is indefinite*' (44) (authors's emphasis). This required effort since interpretation may be reflex (Gallese 2003). The interpretation was co-constructed between the participants and was itself, 'dialoguing with alternative interpretations' (Gillespie and Cornish 2010:39). The expectation was that the participants would bring multiple perspectives (EECERA 2014:3), and alternative interpretations as they perceived, yet still maintained the connection to the children's experiences. Just as the facets of a cut crystal are still part of the whole even if the views from different angles differ (Richardson 1997:522).

4.1.3 Framing the unit of analysis

The unit of analysis needed to include a decision and relation. Decisions were considered to be processes in interactions with other children and the unit contained the whole process constituting the decision: indications that the focus child had been aware of alternatives; and had then taken action, continuing to persevere with the first option or changing track to pursue another. Although I aligned with, I employed different methods to Lamb (1965) who develops Laban's (1956) movement analysis to see decision-making in a sequence: a physical manner of attentiveness, followed by 'an actual physical adjustment suggesting – or of some intention being formed – an expression of resolve of determination. […] Finally the child commits itself to action' (Lamb 1965:98-99).

For the decision to be in relation the social encounter, the interaction also formed the unit of analysis (Packer and Goioechera 2000). Spatial orientation towards the other helped to define a dialogical interaction. Kendon (1990) finds it, 'an excellent means by which interactional and therefore social and psychological "withness" may be established' (1990:250). The episode began when the interaction between children began and ended when it ended, distinct from other events (Goffman 1974). For example when children had a particular focus of attention on sand, the episode continued when they moved off to ride on the bicycles if they shared the changed focus of their attention. However, it ended if the focus child was no longer in relation with the other children. Only those episodes in which decisions occurred were retained.

4.1.4 Child agency

The children's agency was pivotal to the procedure of the research. Alderson, Hawthorne and Killen (2005) position infants and even babies as 'not only actors but agents who alter relationships, decisions and the working of social assumptions or constraints' (47). The participatory approach recognised the agency of the child in four ways: firstly, because of the overriding aim was to understand how the children decided with agency; secondly, the relational agency of the child was recognised in the second-person approach to observation (see section 4.2.2); thirdly, through the selection of episodes framed by decisions; and fourthly, through interpretation with

child participants. The first and second aspects are presented in other sections of the thesis.

The third recognition of agency was in the selection of episodes. Observations were made when the child was highly involved in an experience. The Leuven scales (Laevers 1994; 1996) were not applied directly. The participants and I recognised that we were informed by previous observations of high levels of involvement because these terms are embedded in practice in the settings. Involvement was a potential indicator of what matters to and makes meaning for the child. The parents, practitioners and researcher were each interpreting both the children's meaning making and their engagement with being studied. Observing child-initiated experiences was consistent with the conceptualisation of the child as an active social agent (Malaguzzi 1986). Von Glasersfeld (1991) notes the effectiveness of taking whatever the student produces as a manifestation of something that makes sense to the student. These could be episodes that had meaning for the children.

The fourth recognition of the child's agency was including child voice within the interpretation, however, it remained the child's decision whether to use his or her voice (Komulainen 2007) directly participating in the interpretation of the video. The approach needed to develop trust, respect their knowledge, their choice, and enable diverse opportunities for the children to contribute in their own chosen way (Punch 2002). It required interpretative processes of understanding expression and communication in different modes the children used. For Miller (2003) the most challenging aspects are children's involvement in the data analysis and closeness to the children's perceptions. The quantity of data, both raw, and in the detailed transcriptions could have been difficult for participants to process (Simons 2009). However, there was considerable potential for children making meaning interpreting video as a tool of the mind (Forman 1999), or thinking tool (Rinaldi 2005). The results varied according to how, who and where this reflection took place (Kesby 2007). The video format was accessible to children and, viewed on a regular basis, digestible.

4.1.5 Visual and multimodal approaches

To access aspects of the phenomenal mind in expressions and responses we focused on the direct encounter and the video recording had analytic primacy (Heath, Hindmarsh and Luff 2010:107). Other information about the children was not as

closely situated with regard to the decision in the interaction, as that which was shown in the video. In the process of observing, the manner of observation can evolve. With professional vision (Goodwin 1994) experts appropriate ways of seeing things in ways the untrained may not. Then they may continue perceptually exploring them and making sense of them in very specialised ways. The sense-making in the middle of complex and unpredictable tasks matures 'professional judgment' (Coles 2002).

Angrosino and Mays de Pérez (2000) advocate a shift away from thinking of observation strictly as a method for data collection towards also seeing observation as a context for interacting with those involved in the research, a dialogical context. Video allowed the participants to engage with complex interdependencies. Heath *et al.* describe a 'mutual encounter' (2010:92) that is accomplished in and through the interaction of participants. Their communication during interpretations is seen as embedded, embodied and inseparable from their mutual experience of the video. The use of video was a methodological commitment to reciprocity with participants and the aim that they would constitute significance in the recording. Video observation can reveal surprising aspects of interactions for people who have worked in a setting or been a parent for years. A process of diffraction or transformation of perspective on what otherwise has been considered known may occur. As Iedema (2014) finds in his video reflections with medical practitioners and patients, 'people often saw beyond what is displayed on the screen out across the organisation, back into the past, or forward into the future, linking what is shown to what is known' (2014:198). Video was, therefore, an appropriate tool for reviewing what was known and what was knowable about a child's decision-making.

Visual awareness and fluency are intrinsic to recording and interpretation (Prosser 2011) and allow access to potential meaning made using non-verbal as well as verbal modes. Recordings were made with regard for the communicative and expressive use of embodied modes, principally: gaze, gesture, posture, proximity and movement. The framing and movement of the shot required visual awareness. To allow for embodiment meant including the bodies of all the children in the same frame wherever possible. This represented the interplay of action, and response, and what meaning potential was available to each at any one time. The camera moved following the children's movements, a physical embodiment of perception. One may

observe people in motion and the observer may understand in motion (Gibson 1979). These were further strong epistemological reasons for adopting video. Observation, like perception, is not from a fixed point of view of the object but sees all around by varying the point of view (Merleau-Ponty 1962:91). It also retains the view of the other side, 'the strange mode of existence enjoyed by the object behind our back' (Merleau-Ponty 1962:29).

Relation guided the visual frame. It included the relatedness of the observer. I situated the camera when I positioned it. The recording also positioned the second-person view when interpreting the episodes. Researching the phenomenal experience of the children meant not only prioritising their perspective (Heath *et al.* 2010:107), but also maintaining sight of the other people within the broad sweep of their potential awareness and tuning in to how they orientated to features of their environment. The shot was wide enough to include the situation, although particular environmental influences were not assumed. The wide angle shot from close proximity aimed to see how people constituted significance together (Heath *et al.* 2010:87). It was a framing for confluence more than influence (Gergen 2009). To simulate their first person point of view (although not mounting cameras on the children) and represent close-ups would have privileged the visual perceptions that were available to each child. However, without certainty of when they were in fact zooming into a particular detail at any time with their attention, I decided not to use close-up shots. The use of a second person perspective and representation of the children was deliberate and significant to the subsequent knowing of their experience (Nagel 1974:5) and their world (Banks 2007:49).

The camera position aimed to generate Goldman's shareable presence (2007:5) in four ways: '*Perspectivity*' which afforded both the observer's and other points of viewing; sufficient *details* would be clear to bring the viewer 'inside' the experience because the observer was *with* and not far from the children; connecting the viewer through a sense of 'Being *there/Being with'* the children; and the recording was uninterrupted enabling the viewer to comprehend events in a way that was 'in sync' with the meaning of events through 'Chronological *verisimilitude'* (see 4.1.8). The observations included semiotic resources used by the children when they activated their meaning potential (Van Leeuwen 2004:285). They were signs that took on

meaning in the process of interaction, rather than the material context having a fixed grammar.

It is important to note, and this is the context for the implications for practice of this study, that non-verbal modes are already acknowledged in UK practice such as the Pen Green Pedagogic Strategies (Lawrence and Gallagher 2015), the Mosaic Approach (Clark and Moss 2001), and the Coram Family Listening to Young Children framework (Lancaster and Broadbent 2003). In New Zealand multimodal literacy in children and adults is perceived to have important implications for the curriculum and pedagogy for three to four-year-olds (Haggerty and Mitchell 2010, Haggerty 2011). Despite the integration of multi-modality in these approaches, further multi-modal literacy is appealed for in non-verbal communication (Nyland 2009). 'The time is ripe to begin looking beyond children's words to the secrets that, until now, have been locked in their hands' (Goldin-Meadow 2000:237; see also Flewitt 2005a, 2006).

For the analysis Collier (2001) provided contextualised visual analysis in cycles that aimed to stay close to the flow of the children's experiences (see 4.3.5 and 4.1.8). One of these cycles, multimodal interaction analysis (Norris 2004), accessed verbal and nonverbal communication. It integrated these with material objects and the environment as they were used by individuals interacting in the world (Norris 2012). Norris argues that the messages the individual sends and how these messages are reacted to can be studied qualitatively linking semiotics and phenomenology. Multi-modality also provided a tool to analyse a situation from different points of view, from the focus child's and the other children in any interaction. This function fulfilled Gillespie and Cornish's (2010) requirement for clarity of perspective in a dialogical study. Norris's (2004, 2011) concepts of modal density and higher-level actions address the way that the modes co-occurred. Higher-level actions are those which contain lower-level actions, so for example a child engaged in a high-level interaction about making sound come out of a CD player (5.1.3), used the mode of manipulation in a chain of lower-level actions to press and turned various buttons and dials, and used the mode of gaze to interpret and convey meaning about the appearance or non-appearance of music as a result. Modal density consists of intensity of modes, complexity of modes at the same time, and intensity and complexity of modes combined. Intensity means that the mode observed was being used with particular

emphasis, in for example the tension of the arm in a gesture (Norris 2004:79). Norris associates high modal density with a focused action (2011:96) that could be involved in a decision. Multi-modality was significant in order to recognise the full communication potential in interactions (Flewitt 2006; Haggerty 2011). It was important for children under the age of three with developing speech, as it would be for children immersed in settings with different languages (Stephen, McPake, Pollock, and McLeod (2016).

Kendon (1990) allows for the possibility of individual styles in looking and in interaction. Although gaze is understood as an indicator of *I-You* relations, significance, 'can only be established in terms of how the participants themselves appear to be dealing with them' (Kendon 1990:48). The knowledge generated through multi-modal observation needed to retain the meanings made by the participants, and not be presented in only the researcher's monologic voice (Angrosino and Rosenberg 2011) (see 4.1.7).

4.1.6 Refreshing interpretation

I used multi-modal interaction analysis with the aim of opening up the processes of knowing, 'Every time we think that *we know* what is going on in an interaction, we ask ourselves *how* and/or *why* we know' (Norris 2004:82). Detailed multi-modal interaction analysis looked at each mode and interplay of modes. It re-interpreted what may be misconstrued and what is generally perceived as obvious (Norris 2004). The approach of this study was not to stop at the first interpretation that inevitably occurred (Kress 2012). The use of phenomenology also sought 'always to question the way we experience the world' (van Manen 1990:5). For Keen (1975) it was not always new information, it was more explicit knowledge, '[Phenomenology] It's task is to reveal to us exactly what we already know and that we know it, so that we can be less puzzled about ourselves' (1975:18). For example Keen (1975) revises his interpretation of how his daughter made a decision, not what she decided. Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) understand phenomenologists as wanting to experience things 'freshly' (249) to see the situation anew, letting nuances be revealed, even if the interpretation remained as first thought.

4.1.7 Phenomenological interpretation

Chapter Two refers to the concept of the embodied self (Merleau-Ponty 2012). The children made embodied interpretations of each other during the decision-making experience. For participants to understand what it meant to live in that moment, the open visual analysis (Figure 4.1 and section 4.3.5) followed Husserl's injunction to return to things themselves (Husserl 1960). The first uninterrupted open holistic view aimed to experience the world when it not been 'worked over' (Merleau-Ponty 1968:130) by all that could be said about it. Buber (1970) considers experiences to be removed from direct awareness. For him *I-You* relations are not experiences, including any action or conceptualisation. However, phenomenological interpretation allows for awareness of experiences, as they are lived through and not objectified (Husserl 2001:399). This applied also to the shared viewing of video.

To make a thematic analysis I adapted the descriptive phenomenological method of Giorgi and Giorgi (2003). The phenomena were phenomenal aspects of mind (embodied expressions and responses) that presented themselves, and had been rendered relevant in making decisions. As in the selection of Linell's (2009) contextual social constructionism, the rationale for the selection of Giorgi and Giorgi's (2003) method, was that it aims to retain connections to *context* in contextual imaginative variation rather than Husserl's (1980) free transcendental method which they adapt. The adaptation admits that the context is inseparable, and includes personal meanings made relevant by the participants (Giorgi and Giorgi 2003:253). Prior experiences are part of the flow of current experience (as in 2.2.4), therefore they are not to be excluded, or reduced by being 'bracketed' out as Husserl (1980) suggests to focus on the experience. Giorgi and Giorgi's (2003) method operates on an empirical foundation. It identifies essential constituents of the experience and thereby makes the lived experience explicit. Ideally one does not seek to prove the existence of a phenomenon. Instead 'we describe that which presents itself to our awareness exactly as it presents itself' (von Eckartsberg 1986:5). There is no expectation of certainty in taking this approach, 'no ontological guarantee' (Merleau-Ponty 2012:xxxxv). It cannot make an epistemological claim to represent the child's experience, only the adults' interpretation of it based on the multi-modal voices of the children.

I made three adaptations to Giorgi and Giorgi's (2003) method. Firstly, the thematic analysis used the participants' words to ensure that the concepts stayed as close as possible to research participants' own meanings and captured a key element of what was being described (King 2008; Angrosino and Rosenberg 2011). This was a fundamental difference to Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) who require the researcher to twist ordinary language into 'heightened revelations' (253). Secondly, the constituents were not divided into essential and accidental constituents, they were all considered integral to the quality of the particular experience (see 4.3.5.2). The third adaptation was the end point of Giorgi and Giorgi's (2003) method. Their 'second-order description of the psychological essence or structure of the phenomenon by the scientific researcher' (251) cannot be the analytical conclusion of this thesis because this study does not seek to synthesise meanings. It does not seek to translate the understanding into terms acceptable in psychology but to remain close to the voice of the participants. The researcher's description was not to be seen as the final say: the participants could each make an additional description of the decision made with dialogical agency and they will continue to have their own on-going interpretations of the decision-making experiences of the children. Furthermore, understanding remains open. The understanding was not inert, it did not exist before the act of interpretation, it was actualised in the interpretative process (Bakhtin 1986: Merleau-Ponty 2012).

4.1.8 The permeability of interpretation and the flow of time in interpreting the experiential

As in Buber (1970), Merleau-Ponty suggests the perception of a single field of experience is never detached from the integrity of each '*I*' (Merleau Ponty 2012:373). Wittgenstein also values dynamic meaning-making between people not just remote individual views. He regards the enclosure of 'inner pictures' as 'icy' (1958:30) if fixed unambiguously high and remote from context, meaning and purpose. Wittgenstein (1961:57-58) sees interpretation is a way through the boundary of individual experience, past one self as the perimeter demarcating the world. The world and the lives observed are potentially shareable and each interpreter may go beyond an individual interior, to share others' perspectives in a limited way, and perhaps the sharing of subjectivities becoming inter-subjectivity at times (Rubizzi 2001). From this intertwined sharing of relation to the world there is also the

transition back to a state comparable to the transition from *I-You* to *I-It* attitude to process the interaction, 'Only *après-coup* – when I have withdrawn from the dialogue and I am remembering it – can I reintegrate it into my life, turn it into an episode of my private history' (Merleau Ponty 2012:371). When interpreters of children's decisions draw into an *I-It* thought process it is not necessarily detrimental. Here Merleau-Ponty (2012) parallels Friedman's (1955) qualification of *I-It* as constructive as long as it does not exclude the *I-You* relation.

I recognised that the cycles of analysis (4.3.5) were not completely discrete. The open analysis allowed for the children's experience to be seen in the light of their situation in a broader sense (Merleau-Ponty 2012). Each cycle illuminated the others (Smith, Flowers and Larkin 2009:104). It was the whole that made each detail relevant (Merleau-Ponty 2012). Multi-modal interaction was seen in the open analyses, even though it was the principal focus of the detailed analysis. Similarly the phenomenological interpretation of the children's lived experience occurred in all the cycles. The cycles did not fix the interpretation. As Robinson declares, 'since every dialogue is present for the moment that it is present, and it never comes again. (On the next reading, even by the same person, the dialogue is a different one.) Any attempt to stabilize these confrontations into a pattern evokes the I-It' (1991:96). The interpretations represented *these* episodes on *these* occasions. My individual contribution to knowledge remains, 'permeated by social discourses and significant others' (Gillespie and Cornish 2010) and is to that extent open to others and dialogical.

Neither were the children's episodes discrete. In the broader context of the open interpretation the boundaries between instances still pertained yet appeared increasingly permeable. The analysis situated Merleau-Ponty's (201sino

2) view of a lived experienced reality in the flow of time. See also the time-space dimensions in the diamond model of dialogue (Figure 2.2). For Schütz (1967) the flow or stop are different experiences and video afforded access to both. Video privileged movement. Stillness, even in video required meaning and value to be attributed by the viewer. Video contributed to having a sense of time as it unfolded, and to weighing the experiences in motion (Vecchi 2010:151). In the second cycle of analysis (4.3.5) video was stopped to examine the detail of a particular fixed frame, a moment

in time, as part of the multi-modal analysis. It was re-contextualised by the video flowing in the third cycle. The return to flow counterbalanced any fixing of reality, warned against by Angrosino (2007:91). This study required both fixed and flowing-in-time experiences to remain close to the children's lived experience. The phenomenological interpretation by the adults in the child's social world was interpreted through their own experiences (Shi 2011), and also remained close to the children's lived experience. Beyond knowing, Greene and Hogan (2005) suggest phenomenology as a study of being, and therefore is attuned to a view of understanding as existential (Schwandt 1999) that I consider next.

4.1.9 Understanding through observation

Observation is an empirical process of generating knowledge through acquaintance and description (Russell 1905), as opposed to a solely reasoned approach. Observation may generate knowledge that *may* in turn generate understanding. Knowledge does not necessarily entail understanding. That depends on how the knowledge is absorbed and involved in further meaning-making. Schwandt (1999) expresses knowledge as the answer to the question 'how do you know that' and understanding as the answer to the question 'What do you make of that?' (452). It is the on-going situated process of construing the meaning of something. The understanding is only the best account possible. The theory of understanding is a dialogical theory that allows for the risks of misunderstanding, mistakes and surprises inherent in openness (Schwandt 1999). Openness as a condition for understanding, rather than expecting a sure procedure, is indefinite and unpredictable like the occurrence of inter-subjectivity as a condition for encounter of the other in *I-You* relations.

For Merleau-Ponty (1962) the critical difference between the lived and the understood hinges on the observer reflecting on the episode. He allows for direct experience and later reflection, but he proposes a fracture separating the person in reflection from fully coinciding with him or her self within the experience. I argue that there was reflection as well as direct presence possible within a second-person approach to observation (Reddy 2008, 2.2.2 and 2.3.1), since the observer was not in a transcendental role and the divide between living and understanding was not a complete divide. In taking up a phenomenological attitude, observers asked the experience to tell them what it was and still remained in relation with the children,

not bracketing this relation and relational knowledge. Throughout writing this thesis, as during the observations and interpretative dialogues, I understood events as they arose. Each, together with previous episodes, was then seen in the light of new understandings. Understanding was not all at the end, it was a folding-in of understanding into observing and being with the children.

4.1.9.1 Knowing as you go - knowing embedded in locally situated practices- Knowing operates at many different scales from macro to micro situations (Desjeux 1996). At the scale of the case study of individual children one may not be able to generate or confirm general knowledge, but have the potential for 'local knowledge' (Valsiner 2006:601) of the lived experience of particular lives (Angrosino and Rosenberg 2011). To be situated in our particular locations is suggested as the future of observation by Angrosino and Rosenberg (2011) who prescribe rigorous consideration of 'the ways in which our experiences interface with those of others in the same context if we are to come to an understanding of sociocultural processes' (470). Olsson (2009) also proposes 'practice speaking with another practice […] there is no longer any need to place research above or beyond events in practices' (52). Turnbull (1989) conceptualises all knowing as travelling within a field of practice, 'like a journey between the parts of a matrix' (Turnbull 1991:35). The knowledge generated in one of the participant's experiences may integrate with another of his/her experiences. For this reason Ingold (2011b) also argues for relating local-to-local knowledge in lateral integration rather than the particular relating to generalised theory in a hierarchical model of knowledge construction. Garfinkel (1967) moves back and forth between the documentation evidence and the knowledge generated, each elaborating meaning in the other, almost like comparing the front and back of a woven tapestry. For Gadamer (1977) as knowledge is generated the movement is like a ball in play, it does not have meaning only in itself but in relation moving back and forth in the game. I adopted the stance of contextual social constructionism (Linell 2009) because, although interpretative, it involved the observer in dynamic shared construction, or construing of knowledge beyond an individual experiencing, mirroring or representing what is external to him or her. Giddens' (1982) concept of double hermeneutics appears to suit the layers of interpretation in the process, namely the children's understanding of each other, then the participants'

understanding of that understanding. As Schwandt puts it 'understanding is interpretation all the way down' (2000:201).

4.1.9.2 Knowing with parents and children- Knowledge from home can be shared by involving parents' personal theories in a 'developmental partnership' (Easen, Kendall and Shaw 1992; Macpherson 1993). This is akin to Gergen's (2001) communal construction of knowledge in a transformational dialogue. Malaguzzi values the combination of teacher and parent knowledge as meaningfully deeper than much academic research (1998). Such an apparently atheoretical position from the Reggio Emilia approach challenges being distant from the child's experience, 'reading important past educators and psychologists orients educators' ways of seeing children too rigidly; their eyes and ears do not sufficiently see and listen to what children actually do and say' (Vecchi 2010:49). It echoes the thinking of founding pedagogue, Malaguzzi, that 'Things about children and for children are only learned from children' (1998:51). However, this is a stance in itself, to privilege knowledge of the immediate and particular children one wishes to know about. Malaguzzi and Vecchi's caution acts as a reminder that children are not the same in all eras, cultures and societies. Involving family knowledge in a participatory approach aligns with Ryan and Grieshaber (2005) who advocate a more postmodern review of how educators conceive of children's development: situating knowledge, multiple interpretations and engaging with images. This study engaged with all of these approaches.

4.1.9.3 Methodological considerations from the pilot study - The pilot study aimed to understand the experience of two-year-olds in a case study of Oscar with his family and key person. It explored how adults can make interpretations in an innovative participatory approach to analysis. It informed the dynamics of the involvement of parents and educators as participants in interpretation. It found that in dialogue participants kept the practical study of the knowledge of a child's attention in the foreground while they deliberated on how to interpret the observations. It informed this main study by establishing a starting point for: greater depth in the consideration of decisions through multi-modal analysis of the experience of two-year-olds; and greater breadth in the consideration of what that knowledge could be. It generated reflection about how interpreters go from the particular to *insights* from the particular, and how to account for *context* for the multi-modal interactions.

4.1.9.4 Summary of understanding

Observation generated knowledge that may be integrated into ongoing understanding. The scale was variable. There may be lateral integration of knowledge within a field of practice. Interpretation was understanding interwoven with observation. There were layers of interpretation as adults were interpreting the child's interpretation as they make a decision. Understanding how children make decisions necessarily involved the child's perceived experience and the interpreters's responses. Even drawing on the strictest methodological procedure, the interpreter was experiencing the child based upon his or her previous experiences. At the intersection of experiences there were risks of contaminating knowledge of the child with knowledge of the adults, but there was also the potential phenomenology brings to empower the engagement of this connected knowledge.

This study adopted a contextual social co-constructionist stance integrating the observer and conceptualised knowledge as co-constructed in context. Understanding itself was mutable in an evaluative, fluid process. I took a dialogical view of knowing and understanding in relation with others. This aimed to create an attitude between the child and adult participants of mutuality and the potential for *I-You* relations in observation and in the overall ethical conduct of the research. Parental and practitioner knowledge was valued as integral. I acknowledged the intentional capacity of people, and in particular young children. However, intentions may not be known always, by the child or by the observer. Since my research question is how the children make decisions and how the interpreters can understand this, I, like Norris, focused on observable attention. This was the attention manifest in the expressions and responses of the phenomenal mind.

The theoretical perspectives determined the methodology, the practice of understanding through observation, and the ethical commitments. Understanding the way that knowledge may be constructed and how that may in turn lead to further understanding was the epistemological challenge throughout this study,

although I expect much to remain uncertain. The whole process was complex and renewed with each encounter with another child.

4.2 Ethics

Ethical research relationships were particularly important in my study because a social constructivist approach was made of relationships and how we decided to be with each other (Schwandt 2000). The participatory nature involved an on-going ethical 'contract' to engage with ethical considerations and responsibilities that arose. The settings were selected on the basis of giving 'outline consent' to video recordings. I had access to each through a gatekeeper. In Oscar's setting video documentation was embedded in regular practice. In the other settings (attended by Tia and Henry) documentation was practised less frequently and I used my experience and followed the ethical procedure set out to deal with ensuring consent was fully informed and respectfully considered. All staff and families in the setting were informed about the project and asked for their consent before recordings took place.

4.2.1 The children's experience of research

The children's well-being and assent were always priorities. As researcher I was mindful of the children's responses, confirming or withdrawing participation in the research, in order to respond appropriately (Harcourt and Conroy 2005). Consideration of the children's agency was continuous throughout the research and the concept of provisional assent (Flewitt 2005b), was relevant because it was given on a minute-by-minute basis and not assumed to be present throughout a session. Children communicated assent or withdrawal multi-modally (Pálmadóáttir and Einarsdóttir 2016). Gasgoyne (2012) refers to the Leuven (Laevers 1994) involvement and wellbeing scales to gauge the child's assent and the extent and quality of the children's participation in research. These were useful indicators. Although the parents' consent was necessary, the immediacy of the children's process assent (Dockett, Perry, Kearney, Hampshire, Mason, and Schmied 2009) was paramount (Alderson 1995). This was made clear in the initial discussions with the parents and practitioners. At times I decided not to record with the children out of respect for their space to be without observation and this vigilance signalled sensibility (Harcourt and Conroy 2005; Flewitt 2005b).

In the interactions the children were not directed by adults. They were deeply involved in their own initiatives. The participants' observations were guided by the same principles. The children's awareness of the observer was an explicit part of the research design. The camera was clearly visible to them, and they were shown the recordings. In this way the link between the camera and the recorded event was physically and continually reinforced. Prior to the observations the aim of the research was explained (Fine and Sandstrom 1988), and they were informed: 'I am interested in how you decide things'; that they could see the recording then, that the video was theirs and they keep a copy; that some other adults working with children would see the video, that what they [the children] had to say about it was important; and that they could withdraw any time (Morrow 2000). Asking for assent to all these aspects all at once would risk being indigestible. It was established also during the first observations, and through the relational quality of the researcher- child dynamic throughout.

The children were present when the video was viewed by parents and practitioners and on occasion with other children recorded in the interaction. The degree of participation of the children themselves merits specific attention. They were shown the video recordings during recording sessions when they approached the researcher, and when the review was not detracting from any of the learning experience. This review therefore did not happen every single recording session. When it did the children sometimes requested to see the video repeatedly and then I would engage in dialogue with open-ended questions about what was happening. I observed for non-verbal responses to the video episodes. The children also attended most of the open viewing sessions with their parents and on occasion with other children involved in the interaction. They knew who would view the clips.

Initially the parents consented to the material being shown more widely to other early years practitioners and assent from the children will be sought on a continual basis over time (Hill 2005). A child is continuously becoming as well as being. Children recorded at the age of two may not consider themselves to be the same people, looking back as seven-year-olds. Nor may they wish for those images of themselves to exist. For this reason on-going assent will be sought for specific conditions of presentation of any use of the images still or video in dissemination of the thesis.

Research was conducted on the basis that the two-year-old children were fully capable of withdrawing assent to recording, and to participating in discussion of the clip. Flewitt (2005b) finds this to be the case in three-year-old children. They will have increasing competence in understanding the broader implications of the study as they get older. Most children aged eight and above in Hurley and Underwood's (2002) study named accurately who would be able to see what they did and were capable of understanding their research rights.

4.2.2 Role of the Observer

4.2.2.1 Observer effect - My presence in the children's setting could have entailed a range of effects on practitioner behaviour. They may have stayed away from the area where I was observing. This would have been to avoid disturbing the observation, and also to avoid being recorded on video. Some assurance was given in the study's use of appreciative enquiry, drawing value from what we saw and from each other's evaluations (Gergen 1991; Reed 2006). There was no obligation on parents and practitioners to reflect on the pedagogy. The methodological approach involved the practitioner in identifying, interpreting critical episodes and constructing meaning in them. There was a chance that the effect would be to stimulate a high level of critical reflection, and the effect on practice could be constructively transformational (Calandra, Brantley-Dias, Lee, and Fox 2009). In the research dialogue their reflections were challenged with other perspectives. The dialogue could be a supportive base for both parental and professional judgement, and this in turn was expected to shape the dialogue during the course of the research. The co-constructive nature of the interpretation and analysis within the study design itself also allowed for 'epistemological reflexivity' to shape the research (Willig 2001).

I understood the purposes of the learning experiences and how they may be affected by my presence. I aimed not to restrict the experiences of the children in any way. The second person approach (Reddy 2008, see 2.2.2) was a deliberate acknowledgement of an explicit relational dynamic within the research that was viewed as ethically appropriate and inescapable. I took account of the impact my expectations had on the data I collected. I attributed characteristics of agency to the children because of my image of the child as a competent protagonist (Papatheodorou, Luff, and Gill 2013). I also tended to value this as a positive activity (Bateson 2000). To counter this I was also uncertain about what kind of decisions I

would observe in the time I had with the children, and whether they would be of interest. Overall I expected to observe confident and purposeful motivated actions and these were what I was looking to document. I explored what belonged to myself, and what I may have attributed to the children (Papatheodorou *et al*. 2013:69). Co-construction with the research participants, and open discussion in conference seminars (Lawrence *et al.* 2014) provided scrutiny and challenge to maintain reflexivity, awareness of myself in relation to the children. I did not want to find decisions of too little consequence, nor overstate them. The discussion provided a shared record of the interaction from which the other participants also selected which details were significant for detailed transcription. Therefore as researcher I could not steer the whole enquiry according to my own preconceived ideas.

4.2.2.2 The observer's role relating to the children - My role as researcher in the observations was as an engaged, atypical adult (Corsaro 2003), not as a practitioner responsible for the session or engaging with their activities. I was not to be considered in the ratio of adults to children required in any area of the setting, so there were always other adults in place. The parents and practitioners had different relationships. Although I have a long-term working relationship, I was a temporary visitor. I would have intervened to ensure a child's safety if necessary. There was no need to do this during the observations. I was similar to a practitioner making an observation and therefore not an unfamiliar or disturbing presence. I used a reactive entry strategy (Corsaro 2003) and acknowledged the children with eye contact, blinks and nods and with speech if necessary. I recognised from the start that my presence became part of the situation in which the children were making their decisions. I was present and interested. Being observed and relating to each other was part of their and my experience in a second person approach (Reddy 2008). The children were in relation with the observer (Pálmadóáttir and Einarsdóttir 2016). This would be different in practice depending on the sensitivity, type and timing of the adult interaction. The observer's role was one of continually making ethical judgements throughout.

4.2.2.3 The role of the observers and participants relating to each other - In researching with participants a fundamental question arose. In going beyond the disengaged positivist or interpretivist relation to people studied 'How should I *be* toward these people I am studying?' (Schwandt 2000:203). I set out to travel

together in a participatory way (Haw and Hadfield 2011; Kvale 1996). Denzin (1994) aims to bring an emotional quality to qualitative enquiry, 'to create a form of gazing and understanding […] a newer gentler, compassionate gaze which looks and desires, not instrumental knowledge, but in-depth existential understandings' (64). In Schwandt's (2000) view Buber and Marcel would go even further into knowing in relation, in direct *I-You* relation with participants. It was a more involved ethic coherent with regard for adults and for children, 'theorized from an *experiential* basis, specifically in the experience of the I-thou relationship' (Schwandt 2000:204). I aimed for such an existential experiential approach.

All early years settings experience change, even within the course of one year of a child's life. It was therefore to be expected that the ethical implications were not fixed throughout this period, but required responsive negotiation to circumstances as they arose. The principal guiding my understanding of ethical responsibilities was that they were relational. I had what I considered to be a contract with the immediate participants and the wider circle of people involved. In the case of Oscar, the circle enlarged to accommodate additional staff in a room within the setting. This involved making sure that all were informed about the purposes of the study, what I focussed on when I was present recording video, and what their expectations could be about seeing and determining the use of the video recorded. It also helped ensure that their workload remained manageable when we needed to review the video together, and that their work with the children could be disturbed as little as possible (BERA 2011).

The continual renewing of communication applied to additional families since both the settings had a rolling intake of children. I met the new families and explained the project, that I would not record their child until they had given informed consent, and the communication remains open and on-going. My work within these communities preceded and continues beyond the period of this thesis. For example one family whose child was recorded had three children in succession attend one of the case study settings, amounting to eight years of regular contact with me on previous projects. How the family responded to me was partly based on how I responded with them previously. My ethical behaviour was part of my identity in that

place and part of the encounter with others. I was part of their lived experience of research as I researched their lived experience.

The research relationships can be seen in terms of reactive attitudes, defined as, 'Human reactions to the treatment of people as displayed in attitudes and actions' (Strawson 1962:220). A range of reactive attitudes were demonstrated in the study: the practitioner's consideration of how one family's response to a video episode may affect another family; the practitioner's reflection on her own practice; my awareness of my presence and the potential changes to the children and staff experience; the parents' response to a close study of their child. The responsibility was co-constructed and realised through expression with and for others. To be clear, the main and over-riding responsibility for the conduct of the study was my responsibility. However, we were responsible for how we responded and we had that expectation of each other (Strawson 1962:258). We were developing judgment not only in our interpretations of the children's decision-making, but also of how we conducted our ethical relationships. Eshleman (2014) sources these judgments to principles within practice. The ethics of this study were part of our interpersonal mutual relationships and belonged to all the participants. We were demonstrating our values within the process of our relationships, our developmental partnership (Easen *et al.* 1992). The research was an ethical space for sharing values, 'a particular attitude that leaves open the possibility for ethical reflection' (Ramaekers and Suissa 2011:98), rather than an intervention to instruct parents or for them to feel they ought to develop expert knowledge. Leading the research I was mindful of our diverse roles and knowledge bases. I did not assume nor intend that parents and practitioners were or ought to become the same.

4.2.3 Power, belonging and ownership - Video was not only an addition to observation. For Angrosino and Rosenberg (2011) technology is also ecological with ripples of ramifications through the whole research situation. It would have created an ethical power differential with the participants unless, as in this study, they had access and control. In fact participants were skilled at recording, selecting and communicating about their own observations. Participants were also part of dissemination and were involved in co-constructing right through to the

dissemination of the research in seminars and publications (Lawrence *et al*. 2014; forthcoming).

Power issues were addressed in particular by the use of dialogue, reciprocity, and in the distribution of the adults' decision-making. Parents discussed and decided what to record in their interactions, and which episodes to analyse. Oscar's case study partly sat within a pre-existing research project, 'Being in Relation'. This project had its own ethical processes in place originating in previous work. I did not perceive there to be a conflict between these and the ethical approach of this thesis. In particular the 'Being in Relation' project had research aims which were revised by the participants every six months or so. They could determine the focus of their interpretation and what we should be recording since they were also generating the recordings.

Openness to the camera was helped by the shared control over recordings. The lead practitioner in each setting determined if there were any reasons not to record on a particular day. The willingness or resistance of the other practitioners in the team was less directly discernable and this was resolved through shared viewing. Clips were only retained as research material when all in the recording had consented to that clip being analysed. The majority of recorded episodes include children only. In discussion with the practitioners we operated a sequence of showing the clips to any practitioner in vision first, and then to the families of any children in the recording. Practitioners had control over the viewing of any aspects of their practice, even though the focus of the study was the children's interactions with each other. Similarly parents controlled which clips they shared. Control was vital in moderating the risk that parents and practitioners would be vulnerable to criticism, anxiety and self-doubt (Flewitt 2005b).

4.2.4 Confidentiality

A network of confidentiality (Hill 2005) was established and maintained by the members of the group, not only myself as researcher. The agreement was not to discuss individuals externally, only a general idea of the research. Complete anonymity is impossible in visual research when video clips must be shared between participants (Flewitt 2005b). The adults chose to use their own names as authors Lawrence, Howe, Howe, and Marley (forthcoming). This choice aligned with the BERA

guidelines (2011:7), that they may waive their rights to anonymity, and have the right to be identified with publication of the study. The names of all children, however, were changed to protect their identities. In the case of a child for whom consent to record had not been given (for personal or formal child protection reasons), but who, because of unrestricted access within the setting, walked into the frame of the camera shot, there were two options available: the child's image could be blurred so as to be unidentifiable; or that section could be deleted. Any person in the setting who was included in the clip could decide not to be included. The use of images in the public domain beyond the scope of this study will be through separate continual informed consent. Such visibility would always be contextualised in the study. Even when participants want to be identified, visual images can become extremely difficult to control once in the public domain. So for any publication the images have been rendered as sketches 'to make the visual invisible' (Mannay 2016) and still retain impact. These decisions exemplify the continual balancing of ethical principles as they applied to participants.

4.2.5 The risks to the researcher

As researcher I carry the overall responsibility for respecting the rights of others, above all to do no harm. Dialogue and written confirmation can ensure that expectations are clearly communicated in both directions from researcher to participant and back. So, for example, the parent and practitioners' decision to waive anonymity for publication was confirmed in writing as per the BERA guidance (2011:7). I did not over-extend the research. I did not record beyond the aims of my study and deleted recorded material where decisions were not identified and agreed upon for analysis. The time involved to maintain relational ethics in this study was a consideration. It was possible for three focus children, and afforded access to the knowledge of the participants. With larger numbers of children or observations, the process could have become unmanageable, or need to be managed in a different way possibly with more researchers who may have different priorities (Hill 2005) and different relationships with the participants.

4.3 Methods

This section sets out how participants used dialogical, visual, multi-modal and phenomenological methods in case studies to observe and understand decision-

making in two-year-old children. I recognise the motivations of the participants and consider the trustworthiness of the approach.

4.3.1 The cases

It should be stressed that the participants were part of cases (Stenhouse 1980). There was not a sample. Identifying children to represent the many varied experiences of two-year-old children making decisions in the UK would require an extremely large sample using other methods. The intention to study interactions in everyday situations, in frequent observations, in detailed analysis, with committed staff and parent participants and over an extended period of time, a year of their lives, limited the breadth of the participants, and thereby optimised depth and thickness in description and personalising understanding (Simons 2009). The selection of participants was both a limitation and a strength in terms of trustworthiness (see section 4.3.5). In fact the study had a multiple-case design. The boundaries of the three cases (Smith 1974) were each focus child's experiences of decisions in interactions. Figure (4.1) sets out the multiple case study procedure.

4.3.2 Participants

The participants were three families with children of two years of age, Oscar, Tia and Henry, and the key worker practitioners for the children. They agreed to participate after due consideration of the time commitment involved to view video, to discuss and interpret the interactions. The process of participant selection was also an ethical selection to ensure that the burden of time would be manageable (BERA 2011). They were not representative of individuals who have less inclination or time available to participate. The commitment of the participants to these clear expectations did ensure that no participants withdrew from the study because of time issues. It was, therefore, an effective selection procedure. Generating data to interpret with the participants was more important than the number of participants. Working with their own children or key children, participants were likely to be sensitive to the child's developing communication cues (Meins, Fernyhough, Johnson, and Lidstone 2006:182) and less likely to miss otherwise potentially unnoticed signals.

In the analysis I was a full participant in interpreting the observation. The parents and practitioners had fuller membership roles in both observation and interpretation, since they are part of the home and educational environments in which the child belongs. At the interpretation stage the parent of each child led the discussion and I facilitated all participants in the discussion. As researcher my aim was not to dominate discussions. I made the record of our discussions and then checked the notes of each person's interpretation back with the group to verify everyone's intended meaning. My role was not to synthesise what was interpreted but to represent it authentically.

In addition to my own research questions for this thesis participants each brought individual and complementary research interests to the study and that influenced the selection of episodes for analysis, and the analysis. They are set out in Table 4.1.

4.3.4 The observations

The observations took place within a minimum period of two hours, once a month over four and up to twenty months of each child's life, a significant time period allowing for varied experiences. In some recording sessions two or three episodes were recorded. Forty-three episodes were selected for interpretation, twenty-six for Oscar and nine each for Tia and Henry. The video observations were recorded by myself, by Oscar's family and practitioner. In the minor cases Tia and Henry's families did not make observations at home, although they had intended to. One family had a new baby, and the other moved house in the period. We met after each recording session to review the recording. When focus families had selected episodes and other permissions had been gained we analysed the video episodes.

Participant	Research Interests
Hannah, Oscar's mother	was interested in seeing ways in which Oscar communicated with other children of his age. She wanted to understand how children communicate other than verbally.
Darren, Oscar's father	was interested in seeing how Oscar dealt with sharing with children his age and sharing the adult's attention. At home Oscar only shared his parents' attention with his brother, Max, whereas at nursery there were many more children. Darren was interested in how Oscar managed with sharing in that context.
Sarah, Oscar's Family Worker [Key Person]	focused on interactions where the children had very different intentions from each other. She was curious to observe the relationships Oscar developed with others and the strategies he used to engage others.
Anne, Tia's mother	was interested in seeing ways in which Tia socialised with English as an additional language to the Dutch language she used extensively at home. Tia had an older brother and, at the time of recording, a new baby sister.
Rachel, Henry's mother	was interested seeing more of what Henry did in the setting where she felt he was very settled.
Jo, Tia and Henry's Key Person	was interested in the opportunity to deepen her knowledge of Tia and Henry through discussing these observations. Jo is also a practising professional illustrator. She was also interested in the role of perception in the children's experiences and in the adult's interpretations of the children's experiences.

Table 4.1. Participants' research interests.

4.3.5 The analytic process

The five cycles of analysis are set out in Figure (4.1). The first three (open; detailed; open) were participatory and inspired by Collier (2001) (4.1.5). These were followed by the thematic and theoretical accounts (cycles four and five). Oscar's case study contained three participatory cycles. The involvement of the parents in Tia and Henry's case studies was not as extensive because of time constraints. We selected episodes and details on the camera display screen on the recording day at the end of

the session, and then in our next meeting we combined the holistic open view of the observations followed by some detailed analysis within the same discussion.

4.3.5.1 Participatory analysis: cycles one to three

The first open viewing initial stage was followed by a structured detailed analysis, and then a return to an open viewing for evaluation. In the initial open viewings the video episode was played from start to finish without stopping for the whole experience of the episode of typically three minutes duration. At this stage Collier (2001) suggests looking at an episode to ' 'listen' to its overtones and subtleties' (2001:39). Comments were noted in the open viewing sessions in an emergent process. Images or critical sequences in the episode were identified, these were the ones that triggered questions for potential further analysis. In the second cycle I made a detailed multimodal interaction analysis transcript of the critical sequences, typically fifteen seconds long, and we referred to this when we met again to view the entire video clip in the third cycle. This was another open viewing intended to keep us close to the 'flow' of children's experience in context. There was a zoom in to a detailed analysis of selected episodes and a zoom out to the overall ecology of the child's situation in the open viewing interpretation.

In order to answer the research question, 'How are decisions made in dialogue in the children's lived experience?' and address the participants' own research interests we analysed what was available to us in the children's expressions and responses. We asked questions such as: 'What is the child paying attention to?'; 'What may the child interpret in the interaction with the other children?'; 'What options may s/he have been aware of?'; and 'What decision did s/he appear to make?'. For example, at 43 seconds (Figures 4.2 and 4.3) into Oscar's interaction with Joe and the chalk his attention was both on his own mark-making and on indicating to Joe. Darren and Sarah interpreted that his gesture meant, 'No, I'm not finished'.

Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3.
Oscar's gesture in Oscar, Joe and the chalk episode (5.1.4)
at 43 seconds

Similarly, at one minute 57 seconds (Figure 4.4) we saw Oscar's attention was both on Joe's marks and on communicating about them. Hannah noted his attention may not have been where his gaze was,

> Hannah: *I'm going to take this [the chalk] back but I'm going to acknowledge what you've done'... 'Wow', look how over the top he is with his expressions. I think I'm like that with him sometimes too. I wouldn't have said I noticed that before.*

Figure 4.4. Oscar and Joe at one minute 57 seconds
and Figure 4.5. at one minute 59 seconds

At one minute and 59 seconds proximity (Figure 4.5) led us to interpret Oscar's attention to his own marks that he had returned to be close to.

> Hannah: *He's still got the marks in mind looking to you. 'I've just asserted myself, am I going to be told I need to give it* [the chalk] *back to him?*

The annotations in the detailed analysis were made using transcription software called ELAN (Max Planck 2012) (Figure 4.6) that allowed for video to run alongside annotations in real time, or in slow motion. I noted how and when each child used each mode. The mode annotations were organised in tiers (layers) for each child. The tiers gave clarity about whose perspective was being interpreted (Gillespie and Cornish 2010). There was one tier for gestures, one tier for gaze, and so on.

We could see when each started and stopped. The selected critical sequences within the episode were transcribed. The transcript gave us a basis to think about what was available for the children to read in each other's expressions and actions in each moment. On ELAN each fifteen-second sequence with two children takes about one hour to transcribe. Although I had made the transcription on ELAN, we all engaged with working at this level of detailed analysis in the discussion. We saw children using a range of modes in their interactions with other children, and, depending on what seemed relevant in an episode, we considered some modes in particular. The detailed analysis showed how the modes used by the children co-occurred and the analysis of ensembles of modes could deconstruct how meanings are brought together. It showed when there were patterns of interaction, in reciprocal alternated movements for example, and when there was a density[i] of modes (4.1.5). Figure 4.6 gives an example of the annotation transcription. Complexity could be seen in co-occurrence of modes looking down across the tiers. Figure 4.7 shows how the selected modes were annotated on the transcript in a close up part of the display of tiers.

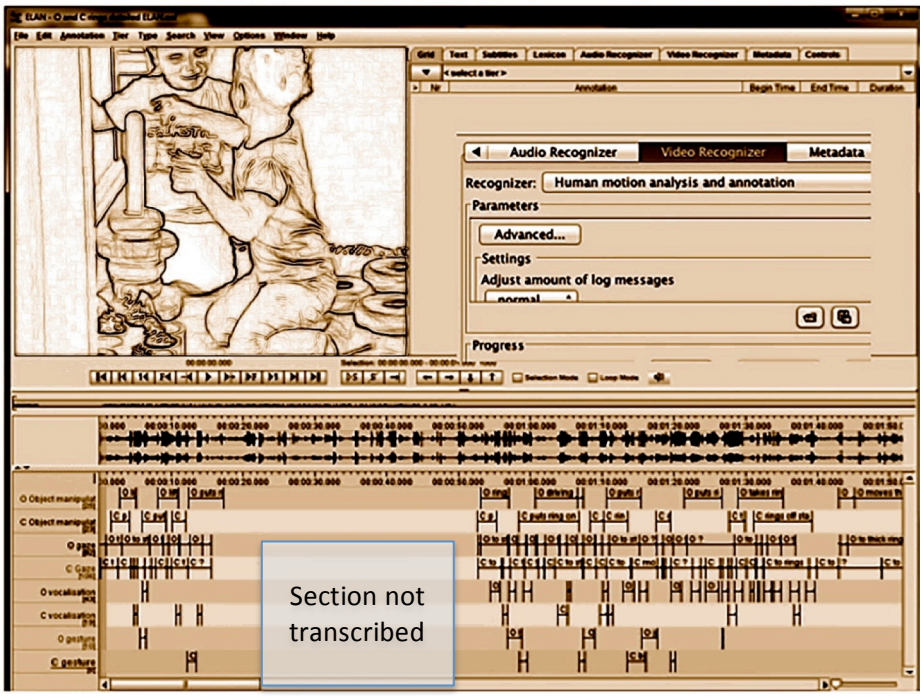
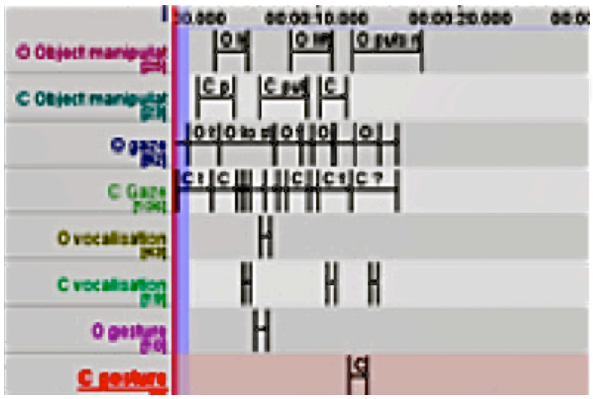


Figure 4.6. ELAN transcription in Oscar and Camille with rings episode



Modal density in the combination of complexity and intensity of object manipulation and gaze.

Compared with the sparse use of voice, and, in this moment, gesture.

Figure 4.7. Close-up view of ELAN transcription tiers annotating object manipulation, gaze, vocalization and gesture in episode 5.1.1.

Interpretation determined the best modal fit of which modes to transcribe for each episode. When we viewed together we could also change between the view from each child (CHILD A or CHILD B) with an ensemble of modes, to alternate children with their tiers organised by mode (see Table 4.2).

CHILD A mode: gaze		CHILD A mode: gaze
CHILD A mode: gesture		CHILD B mode: gaze
CHILD A mode: proximity		CHILD A mode: gesture
CHILD A mode: vocalisation		CHILD B mode: gesture
CHILD B mode: gaze	or	CHILD A mode: proximity
CHILD B mode: gesture		CHILD B mode: proximity
CHILD B mode: proximity		CHILD A mode: vocalisation
CHILD B mode: vocalisation		CHILD B mode: vocalisation

Table 4.2. Alternative layouts of tiers in ELAN: by child's ensemble of modes; or by mode

The annotation of the modes was not in order to compare the frequency of their occurrence. The rationale for separating modes out as semiotic systems (Kress and

Van Leeuwen 2001) in separate heuristic units was to render their complexity and their ensembles more visible, although they are not completely separate, one from another. The boundaries are fuzzy say between gaze and expression, gesture, touch and manipulation. The presentation of the transcript grew. It had an endogenous structure that we could amend.

There are alternative ways to transcribe video interaction and each has its merits for interpretation (Flewitt 2006; Cowan 2014). The use of ELAN was a significant change from the pilot study (6.1.3). ELAN is flexible and clear for the visibility of time, motion, ensembles of modes and access to the experience constructed between the children. Inevitably what defined potential meaning was a selection, and content was left out of the transcript (Bezemer and Mavers (2011). For this reason, it was important that the participants were part of the decision-making process about the selection for detailed analysis and the modes considered.

4.3.5.2 The fourth analytic cycle: Thematic analysis

Beyond the participatory cycles of the study the fourth cycle continued with a thematic analysis following steps of the phenomenological method (after Giorgi and Giorgi 2003) represented in the flowchart (Figure 4.9). I extended the thematic account beyond the scope of the participatory process due to the balance of time commitments and timescales involved for the participants. I note that participatory analytic cycles had already accomplished a process closely akin to the first steps of the thematic analysis. In the first cycle we had viewed the video episode in flow or *'read for a sense of the whole'* (Giorgi and Giorgi 2003:251) (author's emphasis); we had sought more meaning in the selection of sections for detailed multi-modal analysis, equivalent to a '*Determination of Parts'* (Giorgi and Giorgi 2003:252); and we had '*contextualised personal meanings'* (Giorgi and Giorgi 2003:253) and evaluated the interpretation in a further open view.

The thematic analysis started with an holistic review of the participatory analysis (Step 1), assuming the phenomenological attitude of being present with and to 'see' the data as it appeared in itself and in its own context without questioning or claiming validity or existence. The determination of parts established meaning units (Step 2). Themes were then synthesised (Step 3). The themes were manifest in the observation, often through the detailed multi-modal interaction analysis. There were

also latent themes drawn out in phenomenological interpretation (see Appendices IV, V and VI). To align with the participatory approach I retained the participants' phrasing.

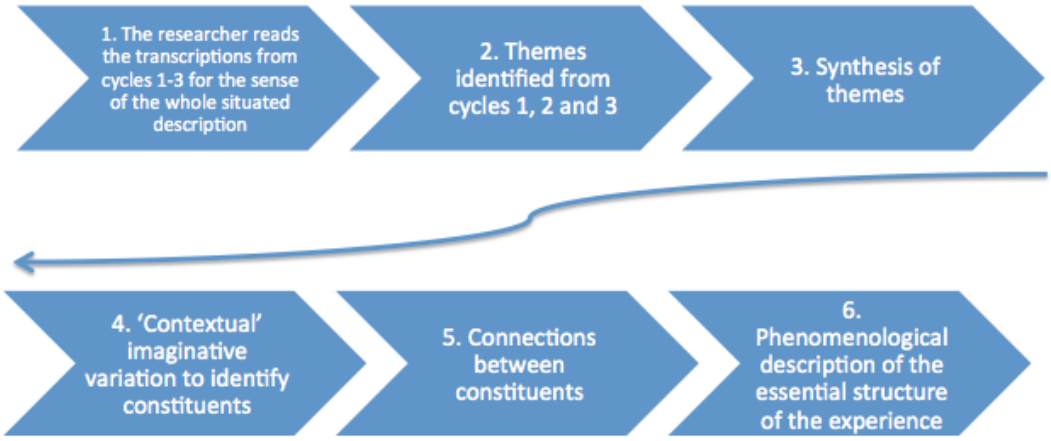


Figure 4.9. Flowchart demonstrating the steps of the interpretative phenomenological method (after Giorgi and Giorgi 2003:254) used in the thematic fourth analytic cycle

Following Giorgi and Giorgi (2003)'s method the fourth step was a 'contextual' imaginative variation. This operated on the themes to reveal what was essential about the experience of making a decision *in that context*. If the experience were to 'collapse' without any constituent then it would be essential for the entirety. If the experience could be modified but essentially remained recognisable without a constituent, then that constituent would be non-essential. Initially I referred to the non-essential constituents, whose absence would not cause the experience to collapse, as 'incidental', rather than 'accidental' as Giorgi and Giorgi (2003:246) describe them. I reviewed this part of the variation during the analysis because on reflection the incidental constituents were also vital to the nature of these particular experiences. They were rendered relevant in the specific incident by the children in the interaction and by the interpreting participants. For this reason after episode 5.1.1 I only considered constituents. Where a similar constituent arose it was merged into one. For example in 5.2.4 *perseverance* was denoted as *effort*, rather than being listed as an entirely separate constituent (Appendix V). *Effort* then absorbed *Trying* as the name for the constituent from episode 5.1.1. 'Poised' hands

and fingers in episodes 5.1.1 and 5.1.4 indicated intensity and were a sign of focused action (Norris 2011). They were represented in the constituents *effort* and *attention.*

A fifth step was to consider the connections between constituents. This facilitated the sixth and final step of the thematic analysis that was a description of the experience provided by the participants (Giorgi and Giorgi 2003:248). In writing the contextual phenomenological description I employed the second as well as the third person rather than the first person used in other phenomenological descriptions (Husserl 2001) because this remained an interpretation of the children making decisions *in relation* and was not an attempt to create a voice for or to speak for them. Neither did the thematic analysis speak for the other participants, although it stayed close to their voices.

4.3.5.3 Theoretical Account

The fifth cycle of analysis, the theoretical account, examined the themes from the fourth cycle and their resonances and dissonances with the theoretical underpinnings. It aimed not to generalise and generate new theory, but to explain *how* the processes of dialogical decision-making may have happened in these cases (Hammersley 2012:393). In fact inference from observations could never be without awareness of the theories during the inductive cycles (one to four).

4.4 Trustworthiness and authenticity

Trustworthiness and authenticity (Lincoln and Guba 1985) were evidenced by confirming results with participants and the high level of their involvement, generating practical, situated knowledge. The participants, and the process as well as the findings could render a study 'worth paying attention to' (Lincoln and Guba 1985). The inclusive and reciprocal researcher-researched relationship rendered an ontological authenticity (Flick 2014) consistent with the constructivist theoretical underpinning. The inclusion of the participants' own research questions and interpretations of what was relevant in their interpretations added complexity and credibility (Cresswell and Miller 2000:127). It was important to set up expectations that there may be more than one possible interpretation and we did not have to arrive at a consensus view. This study formed an emergent model of knowing (Lincoln 2009).

The participatory analysis was an open inductive process, drawn out of the observations and as such countered the risk that we would be seeking to confirm pre-existing theories (Flyvjberg 2006). The participants introduced elements of the children's broader situation because of the perceived relevance to the episode. This could be judged as speculation. A study of a child's decisions by adults risked contaminating the knowledge of the child with the experience, or perceived experience of the adult. However, as established in the dialogical framing (2.2.3), the child was not conceived of as being in isolation from those around him or her, and so phenomenology engaged connected knowledge in interpretation because of 'the actual power that it gives us for taking up our history' (Merleau-Ponty 2012:xxxxv). The aim was to see the present experience in the light of prior understanding. The analysis could be criticised for thematising (Kvale and Brinkman 2009). I acknowledge that the thesis aims overlap with the parents and practitioners' interests and they paid attention to the questions that most concerned them throughout. This can be seen as an enrichment rather than a distortion of the study. They were attentive to and brought these perspectives to the discussions, to the selection of episodes, of details, and of modes for analysis. An interpretative view valued the layers of interpretation as additional strength, an enrichment. The participants' analyses were also mediated by the theoretical and methodological framework of the research. There was rigor in the methods that did not accept only the first apparent interpretation, and supported the appearance of new dimensions of the total experience (Giorgi and Giorgi 2003). An area of uncertainty such as how decisions are made may not be perfectly understood, but aspects of the experience were better recognised. For Hammersley (2001) even theoretical findings remain uncertain in their application and perforce one must continue to rely on one's judgment. Judgment was reinforced through dialogue with the participants.

Giorgi and Giorgi's (2003) contextual imaginative variation would seek to eliminate the voice of participants, I understand this exclusion as the desire for certainty leading to the removal of uncertainty that actually constitutes the experience. In his critique of Husserl, Gadamer (1998) identifies not only the reduction of and removal from the world, but also the addition of external ideals. In my study the constituents draw on the participatory analysis. Although it would have been more consistent

with my approach to operate the imaginative variation in dialogue, it would have required an even greater commitment from the participants.

My phenomenological approach attempted to 'create a feeling of understanding' (Willis 2004:10) for how the children made decisions. Polkinghorne (1983) judges the trustworthiness of phenomenological interpretation on counts of: *vividness* and *accuracy:* vividness draws the reader in through a sense of the experience having been lived. Accuracy means the account could be recognisable or imagined by the reader (46). Through closeness to the children's expressed experience and to what the participants had recognised I aimed for vividness and accuracy. The understanding of decision-making through observation in these cases was by particular people in particular situations. It took place through dialogue about what was relevant indicated, not exhaustively proven, by the attention of the children to what they found relevant.

4.5 Summary of methodology

The methodological approach, relational ethics and selected methods aimed to support mutuality between the participants. The situated expressions and responses of the children, the aspects of their phenomenal minds were accessed through case study, participatory approach, visual, multi-modal and phenomenological interpretation, in details and contextualised in flow.

Chapter Five

The Interpretation of Decision-making in Dialogue

In this chapter I present the findings from the first four cycles of analysis. One episode sets out the participatory interpretative process. For the other episodes there is a summary of each, with salient findings. Since it was a collaborative endeavour the participants are referred to by first names throughout. I will continue to write in the first person and identify the other voices as they appear. The thematic analysis draws on findings from all the participatory cycles (Figure 4.1). The episodes of the three focus children have the same structure: a description of the episode; followed by the interpretation of that episode; finally each episode contributes constituents of decisions made with dialogical agency. After I present Oscar, Tia and Henry's case studies, I shall integrate all the thematic analyses into the theoretical account in Chapter Six.

5.1 Oscar's Case Study

This participatory case study with Hannah and Darren, the parents of Oscar, Sarah, Oscar's Family Worker (the title for the key person at Pen Green), and myself was characterised by extensive dialogue between us and the thesis includes extracts from this process. Each of us had a different although complementary research emphasis (section 4.3.2). Our relationship was already established as a research team on the Pedagogic Strategies project (Lawrence and Gallagher 2015) when Oscar was 14 months old. The case study included in this thesis formed part of a further project, 'Being in Relation' at the Pen Green Centre for Children and Their Families, and followed Oscar until he was 34 months old and started the transition into the setting for over three-year-olds. Oscar interacted with a range of people in the setting and also with his brother, Max, in observations made by his parents at home. We interpreted 26 episodes in all of which the analysis for eight are selected here because they represent particular refinements in our understanding.

5.1.1 Oscar, Camille and the rings episode (30 months and Camille 29 months old)
(Video Appendix I not included in publication)

We are on the floor with a range of seriated rings. Oscar and Camille face each other holding the small rings [see Figure 5.2]. They take turns to slot rings on the pole. At the moment of release their arms and upper body are free to move up, rise up with their voices. They wiggle, lean up, lean back and shake heads. Their faces and voices express amusement. Rings turn like a wheel and the hole can be looked through. Oscar and Camille see that I see, I blink at them to acknowledge them. The last ring is further away. 'Move that there' Oscar says and he gathers it and releases it on top of the others. Oscar and Camille feel the weight when lifting several off at once and vocalise the strain of them being heavier. When they are almost all off Oscar responds to a set of larger rings in a concentric nest behind Camille. He goes over pulls some of the larger rings out and feels the space through the middle, putting his head through, calling us and turning to show both of us how his head comes through. Camille sees him with them. He doesn't see her looking his way. She empties all the small rings off until the pole is completely empty and starts to slot them on the pole again. Oscar sees what she is paying attention to and comes back smiling, nodding, exclaiming, kneeling down close to her to be with her and the pole and takes his turns again with the small rings, one at a time. They both smile and wiggle after a ring goes on. The rings 'clack' on impact if released from the top of the pole and there is a release of energy from each of child. They are moments of tension holding and slotting the ring and jubilation at the moment of release. There is a sense of completion when the pole is full to the top 'Yeay!' says Oscar with both hands held up looking at Camille. Her eyes are on him as she goes to lift a few off the top. They take more and more off at a time gazing at each other. Camille lifts the pole and Oscar pulls the final ring off. 'Narhhh!' she exclaims. Oscar laughs to her as he lifts the pole ring holder away, stands and carries it to the furthest mat behind a column. He turns and walks waving down at the pole behind his back. 'All done' he says looking and walking back towards Camille. He says 'that one?' in a serious manner as he passes her. Her face has an uncertain expression and she looks to me. Oscar passes straight on to the large rings looping his arm through, looking to Camille and lifting them up to show us. Camille does not see, she is looking down. He brings two large rings very close to Camille dropping one near her, 'Ow, meu pé!' [meaning *Ow, my foot* in Portuguese] she says rubbing her foot. Oscar holds out a large ring calling out to her, 'Hello!'. He puts his body through. She looks up. He is waving close to her face and laughing. Her face breaks into a smile. She gets straight up and goes over to the largest ring, picks it up turns to face us and puts her head through the centre space, smiling looking through to us [see Figure 5.3].

Figure 5.1. Phenomenological description of the Oscar, Camille and the rings episode (5.1.1.)

The first episode represents our process of interpretation. This was an interaction with Camille (Figure 5.2) of about four minutes duration in their setting for children under the age of three. The analysis began from the video observation, not from written notes. To act as a reference text, but in no way to replace the multi-modal text in video, there is a phenomenological description of the interaction that was written in the thematic analysis cycle. Since in any case the description would be an

interpretation, I prefer to use this description because it represents the perception of the participants' discussion to a greater extent than my initial field notes.


Figure 5.2. Oscar with Camille and the rings at one minute 4 seconds and Figure 5.3. Camille and the large ring at four minutes 10 seconds

5.1.1.1 The first cycle of analysis

In the first uninterrupted holistic viewing of the episode on video we identified the overall comedic tone of the interaction, evident in the smiling, humorous facial expressions and the playful manner in which the rings were handled. We also appreciated the extent to which Oscar went to engage Camille.

> Sarah: *He's playing with them really playfully, isn't he? He's really trying to get her attention.*
> Hannah: *Look at his face. I think he's so expressive with his face, especially when he wants somebody else to interact with him. He seems to be quite the comedian doesn't he? Trying to make her laugh.*

Susana, Camille's mother, confirmed the range of ways that Camille moved the rings was typical of a '[dancing moves] kind of creativity' she sees at home. We acknowledged the together-ness expressed in their synchronised movements as well as vocally.

> Hannah: *They worked quite well together without really needing to talk to each other about what they're doing. They just knew, "I'm going to do this, you're going to help me do this and we're going to do this together".*
> Darren: *and they both jump about every time they put the ring on.*

In our small research team we zoomed out to consider the backdrop, the broader context of Oscar's learning in terms of schema, a theoretical framework embedded in observations at Pen Green. Schema are 'patterns of repeatable actions [or thought] that can lead to early categories and then to logical classifications' (Athey 2007:49). We interpreted his actions with the rings, as a repeated interest in 'going through a boundary' schema.

Penny: *Does he have a hula hoop at home?*
Hannah: *No, but we've got one of those pop-up tunnels that he loves putting over his head.*
Darren: *When we've been to 'Growing Together'*[3] *there's a tambourine down there and he likes putting that over his head.*
Sarah: *He's going through a boundary. There is a book box [shelf] where he can put his feet through.*

Staff interpretation - In a staff team meeting the wider circle of practitioners reflected on how they read the children's expressions and responses to each other.

J: *they were playing so lovely together […] It wasn't just Oscar's or it wasn't just Camille's. This was both, mutually their game.*
E: *It was, when Oscar came back Camille's face lit up. Almost like "Ooh the game is going to continue, what's going to happen next?".*

They noted the mutual construction of the experience and the children enjoyed the sense of innovation.

Oscar's own interpretation - Hannah watched the rings video with Oscar at home and asked about what he had wanted to happen. Oscar explained the distance he wanted to place between Camille and the ring pole. I also explored Oscar's perceptions looking at the video.

Hannah: *Where are you taking it?*
Oscar: *'way*
Hannah: *Out of the way?*
Oscar: *Yeah*

Penny: *What did you want to do?*
Oscar: [makes arms moving up through ring gesture] (Figure 5.4).
Penny: *Did you want to put it on your arm?* (Figure 5.5).
Oscar: *Mmm* [nods].

[3] a parent and child group at Pen Green.

Figure 5.4. Oscar reviewing the video gesturing what he wanted to do, and
Figure 5.5. A sketch of the video still-frame from the episode (5.1.1) how Oscar put the larger rings on at three minutes 37 seconds

Oscar's focus on distance for the pole and engagement with going through the larger rings echoed the schematic interpretation we had already made. Darren, Hannah and Sarah saw Camille's shift in attention as the key to understanding Oscar's decisions.

> Darren: *This interests me because he was sharing the rings with Camille for so long, and then he's taken the ring holder away to get Camille's attention.*
> Hannah: *He did the "Well I'm taking this away now 'cos I want us to both to do the* [large] *ring".*
> Penny: *So there was something maybe about changing the focus.*
> Sarah: *and I don't think it was enough for him that he just explored those on his own. I think he really wanted to explore them with her.*
> Penny: '*Being in Relation' – doing that kind of thing but with somebody.*
> Hannah: *He's in a very sociable mood. There just seemed to be quite a lot of humour in it. He seems to be doing things for Camille's amusement as well as his own. I wonder whether the interaction with Camille is more important than the actual activity?*

The selection of sequences for detailed analysis reflected these interests. They were: i) mirroring each other; ii) where Camille's attention was when Oscar first explored the large rings; iii) when Oscar returned to Camille and the small rings; iv) when the pole holder was taken away; v) when the pole holder was left behind; and vi) when Oscar re-engaged with the large rings closer to Camille.

5.1.1.2 The second cycle of detailed analysis

In our detailed analysis (See ELAN transcript Appendix VII and the discussion transcript Appendix VIII) it became more apparent that both Oscar and Camille seemed to make conversation and meaning through their handling of the rings. The children used their interpretations of each other to make their own co-ordinated responses and decisions in the context of how the other was relating to them. This

was true of both decisions made before any action such as moving one of the rings, and decisions made in the midst of an action. In sequence i) they held a ring and performed the exchange of head and body movements and vocalisations.

> Darren: *They both jump about.*
> Penny: *There is a lot of interaction in many many ways combined. I thought when I started that she'd started the reactions, that 'dance', but actually it was Oscar. There does seem to be a well-matched watching of each other. There are quite a few things they do because the other one does. He looks through the ring. She looks through the ring.*
> Sarah: *Mirroring there of the arm. That's actually like a mirror image isn't it?*
> Penny: *I hadn't seen that.*
> Sarah: *Oscar's reaching out and she's reaching out. Both of them have got their hands up. He does that a lot doesn't he? He holds his hand like with energy I think you know like ...*
> Penny: *poised.*
> Sarah: *Yes*

We saw a responsive mirroring intense dance of interaction, with energy. We analysed what Oscar could read in Camille's expressions at any corresponding time. In sequence ii) we saw where Camille's attention may have been (see Figures 5.6 to 5.8 for still frames).

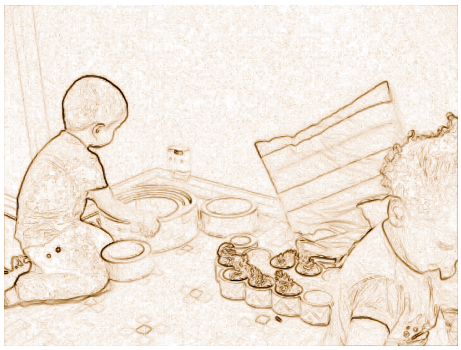


Figure 5.6. At one minute 45 seconds Camille's attention may be not on what Oscar is doing when he first explores the larger rings

Figure 5.7. At one minute 59 seconds Camille's attention does not seem to be on what Oscar is doing when he puts the large ring over his head

Figure 5.8. At two minutes Camille's attention may be on what Oscar is doing, but he did not see her looking

In the details (Figures 5.6 to 5.8) we noticed that Oscar had not tried to move Camille over to the large rings straight away after his own first engagement with them. At that point he had not seen her being aware and reacting to his interest in the large rings. In sequence iii) Oscar had returned to continue moving the small rings with her (Figure 5.9), instead of staying alone with the large rings,

> Penny: *He's prepared to come back to her. She's stayed with that*
> Hannah: *I didn't remember him going back to that. In fact when Camille didn't follow him Oscar seemed happy to go back to the tower of rings* (Figure 5.9.) *before taking the pole away to possibly encourage Camille to change activity.*

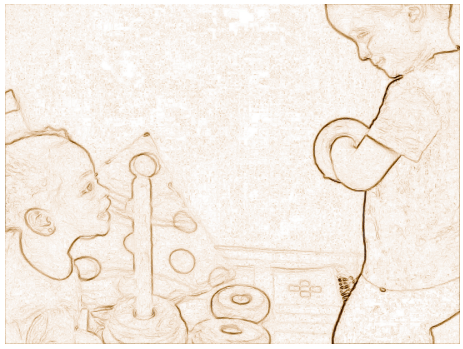


Figure 5.9. Oscar returning to Camille at two minutes 13 seconds from Hannah's detailed interpretation

Once all of the small rings had been taken off (sequence iv), the emptiness of the pole possibly afforded the moment to remove the pole and take the play on. We also

realised as the ring holder was emptied it had been Camille who had picked up the holder itself (Figure 5.10).

> Hannah: *So she picks it up first.*
> Darren: *That's when he takes it away.*

For Camille her own initiative changing from putting the small rings on the ring holder, to pick the holder up was significant. She noticed that she had lifted it first, '*It was me. I did it'* (Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10. Camille lifting up the ring holder at three minutes 11 seconds

In sequence v) our co-constructed detailed interpretation also helped interpret the gesture and what the speech[4] had been when Oscar left the pole (Figure 5.11).

> Hannah: *He's saying 'All done' and now he's saying, 'That one'.*
> *So I wonder if he's saying, 'No we're all done with that, that one's next, we're playing with this one'.*
> Penny: *and he does this kind of, one of these* [iconic sweeping arm behind him] *gestures.*
> Sarah: *For him the only way to draw her attention from the seriated rings to the larger ones was to physically move the pole away […] He places it at the bottom of the corridor and he says, 'All done'. By his body language there, that frame particularly,* (see Figure 5.11) *he's saying 'All done'* [5]*and we're going to leave that there now, a full-stop. Then he goes straight over to the larger rings so I think this is him saying 'Look Camille, come and engage with this with me'. He keeps looking to Camille as if for her to engage with him with the larger rings.*
> *I think Oscar wanted to engage Camille in a game putting his whole body through the rings.*

[4] For example Oscar's speech was corrected on the detailed analysis from 'there you go' to 'All done'.

Figure 5.11 Oscar's gesture as he said 'All done' at three minutes 22 seconds

Even after removing the ring holder Oscar continued to work with where he perceived Camille's attention to be (sequence vi),

> Hannah: *Even when he took that away she's still didn't go to the hoops [*large rings*] like he was wanting.*
> Penny: *Where was her attention? You wouldn't necessarily know that on your first viewing that she had her back to him* (Figure 5.12).
> Hannah: *And then Oscar tries to get her attention again to possibly say "look at these, these are fun, join me"?* (Figures 5.12 and 5.13).

Figure 5.12. At three minutes 51 seconds Camille's attention may be not on what Oscar is doing when he brings the large ring over

Figure 5.13. At three minutes 56 seconds Camille's attention may be on what Oscar is doing with the large ring

The interpretation attributed Oscar with awareness of the other's attention. His actions were orientated to shifting her attention to the large rings by removing the pole away to a distance. His communication of his decision was to engage her in the next part of his decision, and that he wished that she would make the decision to join him with the large rings.

5.1.1.3 The third cycle of open view analysis

The third cycle of analysis was a return to an open uninterrupted view of the video episode to place the detailed analysis in context. Susana and Camille interpreted Camille's reaction and decision after Oscar moved the ring holder.

> Susana: *at first her expression is* [perplexed face].
> Camille: *He took it* [the pole] *away because I wanted to play with it.*
> Penny: *… and then?*
> Camille: *so I not play with it.*
> Susana: *She could still play [*with small rings and holder*] if she wanted. She would go there, pick it up and bring it back, but she changed her mind. I think so because she saw Oscar playing with the* [large] *rings and she thought 'Oh I'm going to decide to play too'*.
> Penny: *So she was fully aware that, she knew what she could do.*
> Susana: *Yes, because if she wants something, she tries to get it.*

It seemed to Susana and Camille that Camille had understood that Oscar wanted to end the interaction with the ring holder. She had had a moment of uncertainty after the unexpected turn of events, and then she had continued to handle the small rings. According to Susana, Camille could have done otherwise. She was aware and capable of taking two other immediate options open to her: playing with the small rings; or going to get the ring holder and continue playing with that. When she saw Oscar with the large rings she did make the decision to join him with them.

Hannah interpreted the relation together with the rings rather than an action upon the rings as being significant,

> *It's definitely the process rather than the filling it because once they've done it* [put all the rings on] *they take them all straight back off again and do it again.*

Oscar's initiative remained focused on being in relation with Camille and exploring the rings together.

> Darren*: He seems to be really enjoying sharing his experience with Camille.* […] *He is just trying to encourage Camille to swap activities.*
> Hannah: *I've been able to see how he uses comedy and sensitivity when communicating with other children*
> *Sarah: I think it was about changing the direction of the play and wanting Camille to be part of that with him.*
> Penny: *There does seem to be this going on* [referred to *I-You* literature in the research notes].
> Hannah: *Yes, definitely.*
> Penny: *"I'm relating to you, relating to this thing that we're doing". Even when he takes the stand away, it's not that he stops relating to her, he's just changed what with. Playing games with the rings is continuing, but within here there's been a little change of types of ring.*

In summary: Oscar made decisions to sustain relations with Camille, and she with him. He decided to engage with the large rings and the space in the centre of the rings, and to extend the dialogue to include these other others. The parents and practitioners had interpreted the sustained relation with Camille as being of prime importance.

The initial open and detailed analyses located me as observer together with the parents and practitioners to interpret and understand Oscar and Camille's experiences. The analytic results so far were co-constructed, although not necessarily synthesised. We were not seeking that. The fourth cycle is my thematic analysis extrapolated from the participants' discourse.

5.1.1.4 The fourth cycle of thematic analysis

The thematic analysis followed a sequence of steps in the phenomenological method (4.6 and see Appendices IV, V, and VI). In step four contextual imaginative variation operated on the themes to identify constituents of decisions made with dialogical agency (see Table 5.1) in the Oscar, Camille and the rings episode (5.1.1 and Appendix IV). The constituents were essential aspects of this decision made with dialogical agency.

	Constituents of decisions made with dialogical agency in Oscar, Camille and rings episode (5.1.1).
	Mutuality: *Engage*ment with embodied *being with* the other. Both demonstrate awareness of where the other's a*ttention* is.
	Change (potential): indicated by, and the sense of surprise '*what's going to happen next?'*, or '*changing the direction*', '*she changed her mind'.* It did not have to mean change but the possibility of it enacted in improvisation and spontaneity. ***Trying*** and ***attention –*** is also part of *being together*, and also indicate agency in the form of the options that the person is aware of having '*if* s/he *wanted*'. '*Poised*'
	Humour: overarching tone.
	Attention to rings
	Space: where space *through* the middle of the rings is made relevant by the participants

Table 5.1. Step 4b of the fourth cycle phenomenological method used in the thematic analysis 'Contextual' imaginative variation to identify constituents in the Oscar, Camille and the rings episode (See Appendix IV).

The constituents were essential to the experience, without which it would have collapsed (4.3.5.2.). The constituents for decisions made in dialogical agency in this episode were *mutuality*, *change*, and the *trying* and *attention* to the potential relations with *rings* and space. In this episode the *humour* sustained an overtone. Since *trying* and *attention* are also part of the process for *mutuality* and *change* these are not completely separate constituents. *Humour* is the way in which all of the other constituents may be enacted and so is a transversal to all.

The phenomenological interpretation (fifth step) considers connections between the constituents. This thinking is reflected on in the theoretical account. The sixth step of the phenomenological interpretation forms the descriptions of the interactions. These are positioned at the start of each episode to act as a text reference for the children's experience.

5.1.2 Oscar, Jake, Jody and Layla Percussion with Plates (22 months) and Oscar, Camille and Ivan and Percussion with Plates (30 months)

We are together at the table. The surface is empty between us except for the plates that are also empty. With hands flat on top and sliding side-to-side they make a scraping sound. They can go faster and faster. They can slip off the edge. Held in two hands and brought down hard on their edge they make a bang on the table. We see how each is holding and moving the plates. We hear the sounds joining together.

Figure 5.14. Phenomenological description of the Percussion episodes (5.1.2)

These episodes contributed a wide repertoire of decisions made in embodied dialogue,

> Sarah: *I like the rhythm and how it's the same and how he tapped his feet.*
> Penny: *like another kind of conversation.*

Oscar was making decisions with sounds and movements he wanted to make, when and with whom he wanted to make them.

> Darren: *the sound gets intense with the movement.*
> Hannah: *he's deciding how he wants to make the noise […] doing sliding.*
> Sarah: *It's at that point he decides he's going to join in.*

Overall these percussion episodes showed the children making decisions in spontaneous improvised-in-action direct embodied presence. We saw the potential for decisions made with *mutuality*, *change* and potentially in relation with the *plates*, and with *sounds* and *movements* themselves, not only as signs to the other children.

5.1.3 Oscar, John, Ian and the CD[6] player episode (26 months, Ian 24 months and John 23 months)

We are next to the CD player. The tray where the CD goes flaps open and shut. Oscar and John press buttons, each lifting hands back when they have done so. John touches Oscar's back as he passes behind. One dial makes the sound quieter or louder. There is a child sleeping behind. John turns the volume up. Oscar turns the volume down. One button starts the music. The music can start and stop a bit disconcertingly, and partly like a nice surprise game. Oscar and John smile animatedly to each other, and to me, when it starts. Oscar gestures with hands up to his ears to check that I've heard. Oscar says 'House'. I nod. The music is about 'Justin's House' on CBeebies. Their expressions seem delighted when the music plays. 'House?' asks John in querying tone when CD is quiet. Fingers coincide trying to touch the buttons. It is annoying. Oscar's arm pushes John further away [...]. Ian comes and the music starts. He dances smiling broadly at Oscar, John (who is standing further back) and me. Oscar watches Ian and mentions, 'Doctor'. The track ends. Ian stops, claps applause and exclaims 'House', looking around to me. Oscar starts the CD. Oscar draws close to Ian, smiling and with an intense gaze. Ian starts to jig again. John looks unsure, still standing back from the CD player. Oscar draws close to John and touches his chest. Then he returns to the side of the CD player.

Figure 5.15. Phenomenological description of the Oscar, John, Ian and the CD player episode (5.1.3)

[6] Hannah and Darren, Oscar's parents explained that the CD itself was one Oscar had brought from home that morning. He was familiar with the BBC TV programme 'Justin's House'. Doctor Who was also a known figure from the BBC TV programme and Oscar's sonic screwdriver (like the Doctor's) was a favoured toy. It was usually to hand wherever he went in the setting. Sarah, his key person, explained that she helped to facilitate this.

The significance of this episode is how it highlighted *openness* (or not) to the other as a decision in itself.

> Sarah: *I love the way they move. The synchrony just flows.*
> Hannah: *He was enjoying taking turns and then later John got in his way. That was saying no.*
> Sarah: *When he's choosing. The 'No' moments*

Oscar was deciding how he related to what and with whom: with John operating CD player; controlling the CD player; engaging with Ian's response dancing to the music; and seeking to re-engage John's response to the music. Oscar moved from an *I-You* relation to an *I-It* attitude, he was then open again to dialogue with John.

> Sarah: *looks like a little containing hold, maybe he's giving him* [John] *a reassuring hold.*
> Darren: *Oscar turned to him and gave him a bit of a cuddle to get him back into the music again […] to sort tell him he could come back in.*
> Penny: *Like opening up again.*

The staff meeting interpretation of this episode was divided. Half thought Oscar was inviting John back into relation, and half interpreted the hand contact from Oscar to reinforce the distance of John from the CD player. The notable constituents in this episode are *open*ness as a constituent as well as a decision. The other constituents are *mutuality, change*, attention to relate to the *music, dance* and the observer.

5.1.4 Oscar, Joe and Chalk 21 months

We are outside in the small space between the tubular bells and the shed wall. Oscar is drawing up on the vertical wall surface with chalk making enclosed and vertical marks. Joe is nearby gesturing with an open hand and asking for, 'my turn' with the chalk. Oscar points at his drawing, holds his hand poised up in the air and then twirls his hand down towards Joe saying, 'Beh' while keeping his eyes on the drawing. He then steps towards it and continues. Oscar looks up where Joe points. 'My Mummy' and 'my Dad' they say with relish. Oscar moves out of the space and in again between the bells. I move around to try to see Oscar's face from Joe's side over Joe's shoulder. Oscar seems to give the chalk to Joe, his expression is open. Joe seems to receive the chalk carefully. He moves close into the wall and close to his drawing. Oscar quickly steps in between and next to Joe's drawing. He moves his arm to take the chalk back and back towards Joe opening up the space near Joe's drawing. Oscar moves in close again to Joe's drawing and expresses interest with an exaggeratedly wide-open mouth. Joe says 'Oh, […] my go'. Oscar moves back. Both check for my reaction. Oscar gestures to his own drawing. I stop recording thinking about where there is more chalk.

Figure 5.16. Phenomenological description of the Oscar, Joe and the chalk episode (5.1.4)

Oscar seemed to decide to share the chalk although this was not easy to interpret because Joe's shoulder had obscured the action.

> Hannah: *Did Oscar let him take it? I think Joe took it out of his hand and Oscar was OK with that.*
> Darren: *I think he gave it to him*
> Penny [at two seconds in detailed analysis]: *Their actions seem considered. Joe's fingers poised holding chalk between some of fingers of both hands, as if he had received something precious, not clasping something that he has seized*. *He* [Oscar] *kept going outside the tubes and back in again so he was deciding to be in the same space with Joe. I think he decided to give him the chalk but I can't be completely sure. Then he decided to take it back. I think it was a definite decision to take it back.*

What was clearer was his decision to engage with Joe's drawing experience, to sustain his own drawing experience, and to acknowledge third parties, '*we*', thereby extending the dialogue. The episode presented potential dialogue with non-present parents (Mummy and Dad) represented in the chalk marks.

> Sarah: *I love the bit where Joe is saying he's drawing his mum and pointing up high, and then Oscar looks* [as if to say]*, 'Is your mum up there?'.*

Oscar seemed to move from an *I-You* to *I-It* relation to *I-You* again in dialogue with Joe. He prioritised maintaining the interaction, in a sense still sharing with Joe's drawing experience, even though he decided to reclaim the chalk, and maintained his link to his own drawings.

> Penny: *Oscar moves his hand into the space between Joe and the drawing and back with his body and he uses the space that is opened up to look at Joe's drawing before moving his hand to take the chalk back.*
> Hannah: *He also acknowledges that Joe has done a little picture, 'Oh there's your picture' because when he first started he made a mark and then pointed* [as if*] to say 'look, look what I've just drawn'. So I think they're trying to sort of share, share what they've done. Oscar looks like he's interested in what Joe has made,* [as if he said] *'Isn't that good'.* […] *'I'm going to take this back but I'm going to acknowledge what you've done, '*Wow' [Figure 4.4]. *Look* [Oscar pointing]. *He's still got them* [the chalk marks] *in mind looking to you* [Figure 4.5].

In this episode the constituents were *open*ness*, mutuality, change*, *trying, attention to movement* and *the marks* and extending the dialogue to non-present parents and to *the observer.* Potentially there was also a relation to what was admissible in this place (because he took back the chalk), the *'we'* culture.

5.1.5 Oscar, Max and the Running track (27 months and six years)
(and reference to Garden episode in pilot study at 20 months)

In the dining room at home Oscar goes straight to the running track. Max joins him and throws a ball. Oscar retrieves it and goes straight back to the track saying, 'Here. Up here'. Max suggests, 'Shall we go on it [pre] tending'. 'Yeah' Oscar replies. The track is still but they both run fast. Oscar runs behind Max moving his elbows like pistons beside his body. Their feet thud. He turns sideways and then forwards again, still running and smiling at Hannah, who is recording. She acknowledges them, 'Are you running?!'. Oscar turns to look out behind. He follows Max's attention to the tortoise off the track and returns pretty quickly to run. Max returns to run with him.

Figure 5.17. Phenomenological description of the Oscar, Max and the running track episode (5.1.5)

In this episode Oscar decided to maintain his interest in running and maintained relations with Max. Although he paid attention to several other possible paths of action, the ball and the tortoise, before returning to *I-You* relations with running and sharing this with Max.

> Hannah: *Definitely Max was trying to get Oscar to do things. 'Shall we do this? Shall we do this? Shall we do this? Oscar definitely had in mind, 'This [*the running track*] is what's sparked my interest, I'm going to stay with it. I'll watch whatever else you're offering me, but I'm still happy with this'. He didn't keep hold of the ball for very long. It was 'I'll entertain you but I'm still not wanting to' […] He just knows he wants to be there* [on the track]. *Then they're sharing that moment with the tortoise and he's quick to say, 'Oh no I've finished that' and do a little bit of running.*
> Darren: *Oscar is willing to follow Max for a little while, but when Oscar has had enough he can tell Max.*
> Hannah: *He definitely knew what he wanted to do. Not that he wasn't being distracted because he did have a look, but he stayed focused on what he wanted.*
> Sarah: *Pretending to run 'working in partnership'*
> Hannah*: He's quite happy to share with Max. He doesn't mind standing there with him. They are sort of mirroring each other there aren't they and he looks excited, he's got his shoulders all curled up.*

The modal density of Oscar's actions was interpreted in both complexity and intensity to indicate his attention on running. This episode contributes the constituents of *open*ness*, mutuality, change, attention* to *running, attention* to the observer, Hannah and potentially to the non-present movement of the track that is what *'we'* do on running tracks.

5.1.6 Three further episodes revealed their own constituents. The Oscar, Ellie and the Jug (22 months) episode contributed a further example *of openness* and closedness

to the other, even in a dispute over the jug. Oscar was aware of Ellie. In this instance there was a strong swing to *I-It* with regard to the other child. Karen, Ellie's mother, noted Ellie did not choose to pay attention to Oscar, '*She will close her eyes if she doesn't want to see you*'. The Oscar, Barry and drawing (27 months) episode contributed constituents of *attention* to the drawing and movements, and the observer. Oscar, Layla and the phone in bed (26 months) episode demonstrated decisions made when the constituents were attention to thrown paper and fabrics, non-present others (in a mobile phone conversation), the *'we'* culture of playing 'Ten in a bed', and the observer.

5.1.7 Oscar's case study summary

Oscar made decisions with the constituents (4.3.5.2) of *openness, mutuality, change, effort,* and *attention* to *space, sounds* and *movements* (such as *running, dance,* and *water*). Potentially the dialogues extended with: the observer; third party adult; rings, plates, the track; drawing chalk and pen marks; thrown paper and fabrics; non-present parents; the non-present movement of the track; and the *'we'* culture of TV, running, sharing objects at nursery, and the game 'Ten in a bed'. The case revealed the many protagonists and ways of deciding in the world involved in the dialogues and made relevant by him and by our interpretations. There were tones in some of the decisions in the episodes, notably humour sustained as an overtone.

5.2 Tia's case study

This participatory case study was with Anne, the mother of Tia and Jo, Tia's Key Person. Tia's father, Daan conveyed his reflections through Anne. The setting was specifically for two-year-olds and Tia attended two to three mornings. At home she had an older brother, Adam, and at the time the observations started, a new baby sister, Elena. The first episode is represented in more detail and then the constituents are summarised for the subsequent episodes.

5.2.1 Tia and the shoes episode (29 months old) (Video Appendix II not included in publication)

We are outside in the playground. The dressing up shoes Tia is wearing are very big for her but she starts with careful steps. Other children are sweeping sand around on the ground [Corner 1 of Figure 5.21]. Where there is space she jumps on the spot picking both feet up at once and coming down feet together, with a 'clack clack' sound. She is looking ahead of her across the playground. With fast steps she runs right across the playground. When she reaches the paving stones (Corner 2), the shoes make a clip clop sound on the harder surface. As we look at each other I say 'clip clop clip' and Tia's feet and shoes say 'clip clop clip'. […] Tia crosses the grass (Corner 3), approaches and stands close to Michael and the bikes. She crosses to Lucy (Corner 1), and stands next to her openly watching her spooning sand. There is Becky standing holding up an umbrella that covers her. Tia comes close to the edge of the umbrella's space and meets Becky's gaze. They both gaze at me. Becky looks for rain above where there is none, and she says 'rain's not coming'. Tia moves on jumping.

Figure 5.18. Phenomenological description of the Tia and the shoes episode (5.2.1)

Figure 5.19. Tia jumping in her dressing up shoes at 16 seconds

Figure 5.20. Tia with Becky at one minute eleven seconds

This episode was characterised by the flow of Tia's movements, her experience of movement, sound and distance, as she went around the playground and between the children also playing there. Figure 5.21 maps her movements through the space.

> Jo*: It's like she was trying to show the others how the heels were sounding with her shoes, 'cos she loves those shoes so much (laughs). Loving the sound of it.*
> Anne*: Right. She loves those! She doesn't have them at home.* […] *At home when she dresses up she wants to show what she's wearing so I think she's trying to attract attention probably.*
> *Oh wow definitely! She's watching if other children are watching her.*
> Penny*: and on the different surfaces different sounds.*
> Anne*: Yeah eh. Trying on the grass as well, yeah* [Corner 3].

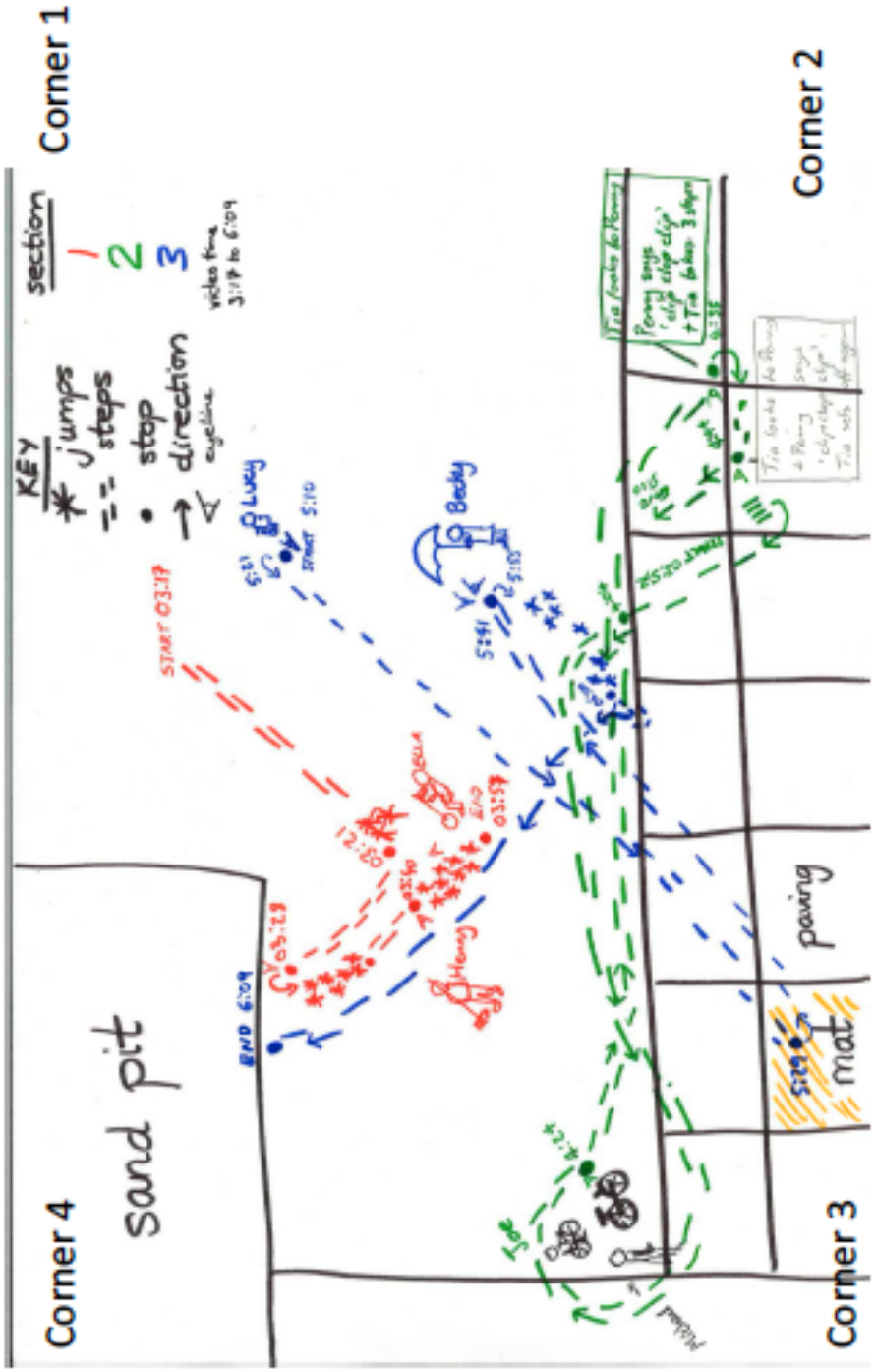


Figure 5.21. Map of Tia's movements in the shoes

We checked that Tia made the same rhythm with her feet as I had when I said 'clip clop clip' which suggested her attention to these sounds. We could see on the video (see Figure 5.19) and map (see Figure 5.21) that her jumps (*) were orientated to the space as a whole, not when she was directly next to other children. Her audience was herself within the environment and the children in it, not only the children. In the interaction with Becky holding the umbrella, she watched Becky intently (see Figure 5.20).

> Jo: *Tia is very aware of other people's space, of how close the get to each other. She hovers close to say, 'I'm here'. It's like an invitation*.
> Penny: *With the shoes, she didn't need them* [the other children] *to do the shoes she just needed to be with them. I'm quite interested in how close she gets to children. It's such a physical being here. You know she's kind of being with them.*
> Anne: *Yeah. Have them acknowledge her with her shoes.*

We questioned whether she would want the other children to do something, or in fact the close proximity and being with them was what she was seeking initially. Tia interspersed the movements en route with approaches to a sequence of children with whom she showed *openness* to encounters. She stopped and watched them attentively. *Mutuality* with the other children was not, to our eyes, sustained in this episode, although there was potential for fleeting moments and there was mutual acknowledgement with the observer. The notable constituent was *trying* to engage, as well as *openness, change*, *attention* to *shoes* and *movements, space, surfaces* and *sounds* themselves. There was a *shy* tone. See Appendix V for contextual imaginative variation thematic analysis of episode 5.2.1.

5.2.2 Tia, Jamie and the cars (29 months old and Jamie 30 months old)

We are by the broad window-sill. Tia and Jamie bang into each other's cars, meet each other's vehicle head on and push each other back and forth along the sill (Figure 5.16). There is some amusement and some anxiety. Jamie takes Tia's car. She watches. He gives her his. She slides it down the wall. He follows her down with his. She lifts hers back up and so does he. He starts to bang two together. Then she brings two pans together to impact with a similar force to the cars, looking to us (Figure 5.17). He goes back down to the ground and moves off.

Figure 5.22. Phenomenological description of the Tia, Jamie and the cars episode (5.2.2)

Tia had decided to meet Jamie with the vehicles in different ways. They each innovated other ideas to share extending the dialogue with movement and contact. The particular constituents were *openness,* some *mutuality, change, attention* to the *vehicles, movements, pans* and *the contact on impact* between them. The tone was at times *amused* and at times *anxious.*

Figure 5.23. Tia with Jamie controlling cars to make impact together
Figure 5.24. Tia's gaze to Jamie as she makes impact with the pans

5.2.3 Tia tipping with Becky episode (30.7 months)

We are by the water tray outside. Tia is involved pouring water carefully into the dinosaur's open mouth. Becky is tipping water out on the floor behind her. Tia turns and watches before carefully tipping water out of a tiny cone herself. She checks with Becky and with me. She looks where the water goes on the ground. There is a darker surface for each splash. They move off to continue tipping separately.

Figure 5.25. Phenomenological description of the Tia tipping with Becky episode (5.2.3)

The open analysis allowed for Tia's personal situation to be made relevant. Tia nodded her agreement when Anne and I interpreted her action with the dinosaur as more than filling a container. Anne said, '*She's quite interested in feeding another because I'm feeling Elena* [new baby sister]'. Tia had decided to extend her dialogue to try tipping out in the way Becky was, but in her own careful observant manner. Anne commented, 'She was wondering if she came to play or not. She was looking whether she was ready to play'. Anne interpreted her as questioning what was admissible in this place,

> Anne: *She was wondering whether. She looked at you to see. Throwing on the floor normally we don't do that!* […] *She wanted to join.*
> Jo: *She considers things. For me it's OK to make splashes with water outside. It's a kind of mark-making.*

The notable constituents were *openness* to Becky, paying *attention* to water contained, in flow, and in splash marks, potentially the non-present *baby-sister*, and to the observer. There was a *considered* tone. Potentially there was also a relation to the '*we*' culture, after she had tipped water out.

*5.2.4 Tia, Henry, Gemma, and Lila in the café episode (*32 months)

We are in the playhouse that is themed as an ice-cream shop/café. Tia is carrying dressing up shoes. She puts them down close next to her. Henry comes close and asks what he can buy. She and he put 'food' in the basket. Tia goes to the doorway and puts the basket outside. Gemma and Lila are both interested. Lila takes the basket, throwing a gold box back. Tia follows Gemma and gives her the gold box. Lila comes into the café. Tia pours her a cup of water that Lila puts on the floor. It is out of Tia's sight. She leans across to Lila flashing her hand open and shut and saying 'be ja' [beaker in Dutch]. Lila offers her cupped hands to receive the poured water [Figure 5.27]. Tia goes as if to pour in to them. Lila pulls her hands back smiling at me. Tia reaches her finger-tips out and asks for the cup again saying, 'be ja' [Figure 5.28]. Lila then puts the cup on the table. Tia pours water back and fourth from cup to jug, showing Lila.

Figure 5.26. Phenomenological description of the Tia, Henry, Gemma and Lila in the café episode (5.2.4)

Throughout this episode Tia was attentive to a group of others and entered into interactions with each of them and with objects.

> Anne: *Sometimes she seems like she's in a world, a bubble on her own, like with the dinosaur, but then she was busy with the water and connecting to us* [family]. *In the café she's in there with the other children too.*

Tia also demonstrated her capacity for pursuing her own interests with concentrated attention, for example she made the requesting hand gesture for the cup with a particular intensity [Figure 5.27].

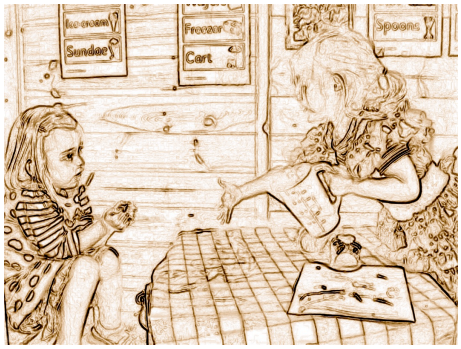


Figure 5.27. Lila cups her hands
Figure 5.28. Tia requests the cup from Lila

> Jo: *Lila's cupped hands are an alternative cup* [Figure 5.27] *and Tia was tempted to pour water into them, but she decided she wants the actual cup between them. That hand-flashing is pretty determined.*
> Anne: *She has little language [*English*] so she tries in other ways.*
> Daan: [I] *Liked that she was talking with hands*
> Penny: *Reading Lila and communicating with Lila using gestures worked. Thinking of others*.
> Anne: *It's all quite friendly. That's her problem solving.*

The similar affordance of the alternative cup did not dissuade her. On other decisions Tia was insistent about what others could do. This was even when she could have, and would perhaps have liked to have, done otherwise.

> Penny: *Thinking of others*.
> Anne: *giving a lot of things to others [*food in basket for Henry + gold box to Gemma*]. Even gives things she's like to have herself.*
> Daan: *She is very persistent in what she wants*
> Anne: *She is not afraid to have conflicts.*

Tia could prioritise the interaction with the other children such as Gemma and Henry with the things in the shopping basket,

> Penny: *Overall* [she] *wanted to keep it going I think. She tries to give it* [the gold box] *to her* [Gemma]. *The other children take everything and she goes and offers something to the child who didn't get anything.*
> Anne: *She's often quite persevering in that she wants somebody to have something. If they don't want it she's quite [!] she just wants to keep on giving it. Sometimes it can be a biscuit which she likes herself. So if, after a lot of perseverance, the person doesn't want it she will eat it herself.*
> Penny: *but she'll try.*
> Anne: *Yeah! […] She really wants the other person to have it.*

The contextual interpretation came from home where Tia's level of perseverance was already marked with her older brother,

> Anne: *The other day she wanted him to dress up. She was carrying his knight outfit to him. He didn't want to but again she can be quite perservering.*

Penny: *'cos in a way persevering is a decision isn't it.*
Anne: *Yeah and maybe she has to show more of those things* [perseverance at nursery] *when she doesn't speak the language.*

The notable constituents were the *openness, friendly overtone, effort* to *persevere,* the attention to the relations with *shoes, shopping in and out of the basket,* and *tipping* and *pouring water with the cup.*

5.2.5 Tia, Jamie and movement routes and telephone (35 months)

We are in the playground. Tia moves around, up steps, across the platform, down the slide, through arches, and into the playhouse. Jamie follows her close behind throughout. She presses buttons on the till. He fetches a phone with big buttons from inside the nursery. He talks about a wheelchair. She watches him. She uses the buttons on the phone and lifts the receiver smiling. They each take another turn with the phone. She leaves and he follows across the playground.

Figure 5.29. Phenomenological description of the Tia, Jamie and movement routes and telephone episode

Tia decided where to go and responded to Jamie's innovation. This was an example of Tia being in dialogue with the environment with Jamie, and responding to the affordances of the buttons on the telephone and till. This episode is more engaged with other children than Tia's dialogue with shoes episode because the other child, Jamie, accompanied her (see Figure 5.30), and she responded to his extension to use the telephone. The notable constituents are *openness, mutuality, change,* the *attention* to *space* and *movement* in relation to steps, slide and arches in the environment plus the attention to the receiver and the till and phone buttons, and potentially the non-present caller.

Figure 5.30. Tia leads Jamie around the playground

5.1.7 Tia's case study summary

Tia made decisions with the constituents of: *openness, mutuality, change*, *effort, attention* to *shoes* and *movements, space, surfaces* and *sounds*. Potentially the dialogue *extended* with: the observer; vehicles, pans and the contact on impact between them; water contained and in flow; steps, slide and arches; shopping in and out of the basket; the receiver and the till and phone buttons, and potentially the non-present caller; the non-present baby-sister; and the '*we*' culture, after she had tipped water out. There were tones in parts of the interactions, notably *anxious* and *amused* tones. There were also *shy, considered* and *friendly* overtones sustained throughout episodes.

5.3 Henry's case study

Henry was the oldest of the children in the case studies. I started observing him when he was thirty-two months old. He had an older brother, Tom who was five. He attended his setting for two-year-olds three times a week. The interpretation of the observation was in dialogue with his mother, Rachel, and his key person, Jo, who was also the key person for Tia.

5.3.1 Henry with Freddy and sand (34 months) (Video Appendix III not included in publication)

We are in the sand pit. The sand can be heaped up on the log ends around the edge, a heap on top of each horizontal surface. Henry and Freddy are moving around the perimeter chanting 'Finished' as they check each log's heap. The mirror breaks the surface in the brick wall, like a space in the bricks. Henry scatters sand up against the mirror, so does Alfie (Figures 5.32 and 5.33). The sand can be used as a cover at bedtime, 'Bedtime' Henry announces. 'Bury me' Henry asks. Freddy can cover Henry with sand. The adult (F) starts a game to cover objects. 'Bury me' Henry asks again. Henry and Freddy return to cover Henry's whole body. The sand is scatter-able and we can see a cloud effect in the air in front of us. Henry and Freddy stand and watch each other and take turns to throw (Figure 5.34). They are doing this scattering together. They sing 'together forever' and swing their arms and the scattered sand in the air. It feels as if they are celebrating being together.

Figure 5.31. Phenomenological description of the Henry with Freddy and sand episode (5.3.1)

Figure 5.32. Henry sprays sand in the mirror at two minutes 48 seconds
Figure 5.33. Freddy sprays sand at two minutes 43 seconds

Figure 5.34. Freddy and Henry make the sand song together at three minutes 15 seconds

The open analysis connected Henry's experience with recent a recent trip to a beach.

> Rachel: *His daddy buried him in Falmouth so! So that's obviously why he's – 'Bury me'.*

Penny: *And this idea that things remind him of something. So who's making the choice. Is it just that we're suggestible.* […] *The provision is there, and the provision helps him make decisions.*
Jo: *I think it's like when I was doing some research for my paintings, people's interpretation of my paintings. It's what they've got in their perception that they're able to understand a painting with.* […] *Everybody's got different interpretation according to what they've experienced.*

Henry was in dialogue with the sand and Freddy, the beach and his dad at the weekend. Although Henry's experience was potentially very different to Freddy's because he could have drawn on his previous experience, this was an intensely cooperative interaction, both deciding to 'bury' a body rather than an object and both deciding not to continue the adult-initiated game.

The detailed analysis perceived his preference for the embodied experience that he repeatedly chose, instead of the hiding objects alternative activity proposed by the adult that did not involve his whole body.

Penny: It's not for lack of adult supervision. F [the practitioner] *kept saying, "Oh I don't think you want that Henry, do you. Here why don't you hide these things and bury these things instead?". He kept going back and saying, "Bury me!".*

Jo: *or it was important to him to repeat the same ritual* [as with his dad] *because that is what he had enjoyed before. It was the memory of it. They could be expressing independence. Asserting what they wanted to do. Finding hidden objects isn't the same as feeling covered by sand.*

In our analysis Henry and Freddy extended their cooperative play to explicitly affirm their shared experience. Both created the sand song dance (Figure 5.23). The song[7] maybe one they have both heard and therefore potentially a part of the '*We'* culture that they were situated in. It was not one Rachel readily recognised.

Rachel: *Whatever it is they kept it going together.*

What they sang was in any case improvised together to some extent and thereby part of the sustained mutual experience. Jo, as an illustrator, also perceived the form of the sand in the air as significant for the children (Figures 5.32. and 5.33).

Jo: *The shapes the sand makes as it rises and falls. Henry was more fascinated and looking at the shape of the spray of sand and the reflections the sand made in the mirror. Freddy was more interested in the power of throwing, seeing a large spray rising and falling.*

[7] May be based on a track by Rick Astley, 'Together Forever' (1988), a Pokémon theme tune 'Together Forever' (2006), or a song from the film 'Frozen'.

It's [the sand is] *part of our world we're part of that.*

The throwing was like marking that moment in time, although they were using their voices, the ritual of throwing marked their experience that they were expressing about togetherness.

The constituents are *openness*, *mutuality*, *change* and *attention* to the *sand*. Potentially the dialogue extends with: space and movement; sounds; '*we*' culture song; the non- present environment of the beach; Daddy (non-present). See Appendix VI for contextual imaginative variation of episode 5.3.1.

5.3.2 Henry, Billy and the straw (33 months)

Henry, Billy and I are next to the water tray. The adult is singing about speckled frogs. Unbidden, Henry carries the big log from the other side of the garden for the frogs to sit on, he shows me […]. The garden surrounds Henry as he spins around the pole chanting, 'Da da da da. I going round the garden'. He scooters and skips through the space, stopping by a table. He mixes sand in a container with a wooden spoon, next to Casey. 'I'm making gingerbread'. Tongs can grip the spoon, the spoon is long and grip-able, like the straw at the baker's. Henry walks across towards the sandpit and calls, 'Straw' out loud and strong. It slips out of the tongs. He starts again from the beginning by the table twice over and carries it over to Billy in the sand pit. There a container can be filled with sand. Billy goes to ride a bike. Other children are playing with a baby doll. Henry stops and watches them. The sand can be emptied out from the container in the middle of the playground where the cycles pass. Billy passes anyway. The container itself can block the cycling route. Billy can move to the side of it and the container can slide in front of him again. Henry and Billy cycle round and round. Henry pauses to bounce then they continue circling fast calling to each other. 'I won' declares Henry as he passes an imaginary finishing line at one edge of the garden. He stopped there.

Figure 5.35. Phenomenological description of the Henry, Billy and the straw episode (5.3.2)

Henry's interactions with Billy framed this episode. He was also in dialogue with other others including me as the observer, because he addressed his speech about the additional log, to me. When he was swinging around the pole and singing there was potentially a dialogue not only with that pivotal point, but also with the surrounding garden he was situated in and the movement in it.

Penny: *How is he deciding between the different things that he does? What is he paying attention to?*
Rachel: *I think he's motivated by physical things a lot. I think he concentrated for a long time he then has to do something,*
Jo: *He moves.*
Rachel: *he moves on to something that's movement based. He needs that kind of jumping around or getting on the bikes again and then he's back on to something with Billy.*
Penny: *He just suddenly starts to bounce! These are different levels of decisions. Ones that are part of a story and ones that are one-off.*

Henry punctuated other focused times with decisions to do physical things, even the physical experience of the racing circuits on the scooter was punctuated by the physical experience of bouncing. The dialogue was also in a non-present environment through imagining the creation of a pond, and a race track. He introduces the race as a context for their movement and in identifying the 'finishing line' position to stop. Henry was potentially in dialogue with a pond that was not there, and a track that was not actually there.

In our open analysis Rachel, Henry's mother, clarified what Henry was saying,

Henry (in video) calls out loud: STRAAAW!
Rachel: *He's saying cheese straw then isn't he? He does like the baker's. They always use the pincers when you're in the baker's to get the cheese straws.*
Rachel and Jo together: *that's* [the tongs are] *for the straw.*
Jo: *and I think things remind him of something. He sees a spoon and that reminds him of a straw.*
Rachel: *He does make links quite well I think. He brings his straw from the baker's to Billy. He's brought one to the other.*

With this zoom out to Henry's experience outside the setting we could see that the tongs and the spoon afforded an engagement with non-present others, the straw and potentially the baker and customers, as well as with Billy.

Henry transformed the container into a road-block in a dialogue with Billy the object, space, proximity, sand and movement.

Rachel: *I think the important thing then was, from when he was in the sandpit he wanted to be part of that didn't he, but didn't know how to do it. So that was a way of getting himself involved with that game.*
Jo: *and it worked. They made the race together when they were both riding the bikes.*

Henry had decided to employ present and imagined resources, proximity and movement in space to engage Billy in particular in his proposals. Billy responded to his *openness* in the mutual race. Henry made decisions with the constituents of: *openness, mutuality, change* and *effort*. Potentially the dialogue extends with: attention to movements *(*including *physical* punctuations), space; the observer; the 'we' culture 'Speckled Frog' song: the imaginary pond; a great big log; baker's shop; cheese straw; and race-track.

Henry's case study summary

Henry made decisions with the constituents of: *openness, mutuality, change, effort* and *sand*. Potentially the dialogue extended with: the *movements* (including *physical* punctuations); space; the observer; the 'we' culture 'Speckled Frog' song and 'together' song; non-present pond, baker's shop; cheese straw; and race-track; the beach; Daddy (non-present).

5.4 Summary of the first to fourth cycles of analysis

5.4.1 The constituents in these cases

The thematic analyses for the three children generated a cumulative list of constituents of how the decisions were made through dialogical agency. The protagonists made relevant by the children and the interpreting adults, for example sand or sounds, were not in themselves constituents. The extension of dialogue to them was the constituent. Table 5.2 indicates some of the connections between constituents *in these cases.* What is understood through the constituents is explained further in the fifth analytic cycle, the theoretical account in Chapter Six.

The main finding is the move into, and maintenance of *I-You* relations were observed and interpreted by the research group. In our dialogue close attention helped us to see the shifts. The three children made decisions with dialogical agency with *openness*, *mutuality, attention change* and *effort*. At times there was a sustained tone to the interaction. The other findings were how decisions may be made in the *extension* of dialogue with other potential protagonists, objects, environment, and those from prior experience, cultural or imagined. These constituents were made relevant by the children and by the interpreters in these situations.

1) *Openness*- as a pre-condition for mutuality/inter-subjectivity. *Attention* to the other and *effort* were a part of *openness*.
2) *Mutuality* – occurred when there was a transition from *I-It* into *I-You* relations. *Attention* to the other maintained mutuality and this occurred sometimes through the child exerting some *effort*. *Attention* and *effort* also demonstrated agency because the focus child was aware of alternatives that s/he could have chosen otherwise. Potential to *change* was characterised by spontaneity and improvisation when it was enacted. It was also the possibility to change or to remain with a course of action and was part of the response to the other.
   Sometimes *I-You* formed the over-arching relation, a relational flow, within which there were *I-It* attitudes. Sometimes there was an *overtone* to the episode such as humour.
3) *Extending the dialogue in the world* – to include additional others as well as the other child such as the observer or any of the following:
   Space – a decision made in dialogue with space or the environment itself.
   Movement –a decision made in dialogue with movement itself.
   Sound –a decision made in dialogue with sound itself.
   Objects, materials and the environment –a decision made in dialogue with objects, materials, and/or the environment themselves.
   Non-present others– may encompass a decision in dialogue a non-present human, environment, object, or cultural reference.

Table 5.2. Summary of constituents of decisions made with dialogical agency in the case study episodes

5.4.2 Limitations of constituents

The constituents of decisions made with dialogical agency did not constitute a checklist for assessment. Nor were they an observational tool for independent agency (Whitebread *et al.* 2009). Imaginative variation, aiming to reduce each phenomenon to the essence, may have helped understand the structure of actual experiences in terms of constituents. However, the essence was never real and could not determine the real. It could not be used to generalise. I discuss this further in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

The Fifth Analytic Cycle: The theoretical account of the constituents of decisions made with dialogical agency

In this chapter I analyse the participatory interpretation and thematic analysis in conjunction with my interpretation of theory. It is the fifth cycle of analysis. I review how decisions may be experienced by the children *in these episodes* as indicated by constituents of decisions made through dialogical agency.

The constituents are intrinsic in these cases. One cannot reconstitute the actual first experience or any other from the reduced essence (Merleau-Ponty 1968:112). The reconstituted could not be the same as the original situated phenomena. Not least the flow of time means the situation would be different. For Linell (2009) the whole dialogue's dynamic time- space dimension, 'induces continuous recontextualisations across contexts' (96). The constituents are intricately co-related (see Appendix IV). The links between constituents give a sense of the structure of the experience that, according to Giorgi and Giorgi (2003), supersedes categorical thinking. That is why it is important not to think of them as a checklist. However, the constituents remain just possibilities, not realities. For this reason there were severe limitations in the epistemology even of contextual rather than free imaginative variation because these children's decisions were situated and may not be abstracted through induction. The whole made any part relevant.

The difficulty with differentiating between the essential constituents and the incidental ones that could be modified was that the entire experience was constituted by the inclusion of each. For example, without humour the rings episode would be different to a significant degree. At what point it would have collapsed and cease to remain recognisable was very much up to the individual interpreter's imagination.

The debate here concerns minimal and maximal essentialism. Through the process of analysis I have moved away from a minimal position in which some of the attributes

of a thing may be essential to the thing, and others accidental (Quine 1976:175–6). I have moved towards the characterisation of maximal essentialism in which all of the constituents are essential (Della Rocca 1996). The epistemology of the essential/accidental distinction is an involved one and requires more exploration than this thesis permits. In brief I took the position from the thematic analysis of Oscar, Camille and the rings episode (5.1.1) onwards that I considered all the constituents to be essential to each episode. In a sense I have exceeded Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) in contextualising the phenomenological analysis.

6.1 *Openness*

Openness to the other is part of, but it is not completely bound by *mutuality*, more on which follows. Neither is *openness* a guarantee of *mutuality*. It does not develop into mutuality always. It is a pre-condition, and so I delineate it as the primary constituent of decisions made through dialogical agency in these cases, and mutuality as the second. *Openness* may figure as Tia 'hovers' in 5.2.1 in a limited way or extensively as she persevered more forcefully in 5.2.4.

Effort is the precursor to forming relation for Buber (1958:43), and is evident in Tia's perseverance when she thought of and gave things to other children (5.2.4). It is also in Henry's engagement with Billy (5.3.2), Oscar looking at Joe's chalk drawing (5.1.4), and getting Barry to look at his own drawing (5.1.6). Dialogical agency is demonstrated in the considerable and considered *effort* that Oscar exerted to engage Camille and shift focus to the large rings (5.1.1). *Effort* may function in a similar way to Göncü's (1993) negotiation as an indicator of inter-subjectivity and *openness* (see episodes 5.1.1; 5.1.5; 5.1.6; 5.2.2; 5.3.2).

The children and the adults may interpret *openness* through the *attention* the children paid to the other. I recognise that the interpretation of the phenomenal mind (Norris 2004, 2011) may not correspond to the internal experience of *openness*. We interpreted it as embodied in-between the parties in the children's physical orientation, 'a commonality of readiness' (Kendon 1990:247) before social 'withness' is established (1990:250). Tia's itinerary with her shoes (5.2.1) demonstrated her *openness* to other children en route, even if mutuality was fleeting or did not happen fully with them on each occasion. Joe's act to close the interactive space (Kendon

1990; Payler 2007) (5.1.4) was interpreted as a trigger for Oscar to stop sharing the chalk and to try to re-establish *openness* in their interaction. Tia requested *openness* and for the cup to be on the table between Lila and herself (5.2.4), rather than out of sight below, just as she shared the open shopping basket between Henry and herself. Oscar and Camille's interaction with the rings started with *openness* to each other and included the mutual appreciation of the other's perspective (Buber 1970). Oscar appeared to switch between his own first person perspective and his demonstrated understanding of Camille's. This was the process of opening that led to mutuality.

The transition into *mutuality* occurred with some protagonists and not others. In the episode with the CD player (5.1.3), the research team interpreted Oscar's *openness* developing into mutuality with Ian and the music. It was less certain between Oscar and John and interpretations differed. If Oscar did make an invitation to John in the second part, then he may have been open to a living relationship (Buber 1970) with John and the music and Ian dancing. In 5.2.4 Tia's world, her 'bubble', as Anne described it, enlarged to include the other children.

The face-to-face situation was an open system of a variety of equivalent positions (Bråten 2009:193). Oscar and Camille (5.1.1. and 5.1.2.) used mainly the upper half of the body in intricate rhythmic acts (Trevarthen 2000:172). The children were compelling attention and signaling that their interests were attuned even as they changed (Trevarthen 2009) (see also Henry in 5.3.1.). Trevarthen (1998) saw mirroring as the 'embodiment of motives' (46). Tia and Jamie and the cars (5.2.2), Henry, Freddy and the sand (5.3.1), Oscar, Camille and the rings (5.1.1), all synchronised or co-ordinated their use of modes responding to each other. They signalled that they were with and *open* to each other (Kendon 1990:114). The *openness* to an *I-You* relation was lived through paying *attention* and I shall return to this in the mutuality constituent. Talamo and Pozzi (2011) position experience before inter-subjectivity. The sequence is represented in Figure 6.1. The reciprocal awareness between Oscar and Camille (5.1.1), and Henry and Freddy (5.3.1), could increase specifically with regard to each other through dialogue with the rings, and the sand-throwing song, respectively. There is a qualification. The process first requires *openness* from the innate capacity for inter-subjectivity, and then becomes dialogue (Buber 1970; Trevarthen 1979; Stern 2000). Furthermore the inverse of

Talamo and Pozzi's (2011) directionality can be seen in the sense that Duranti (2010) sees inter-subjectivity as the existential condition that could lead to mutuality, to a shared understanding (see Figure 6.2).

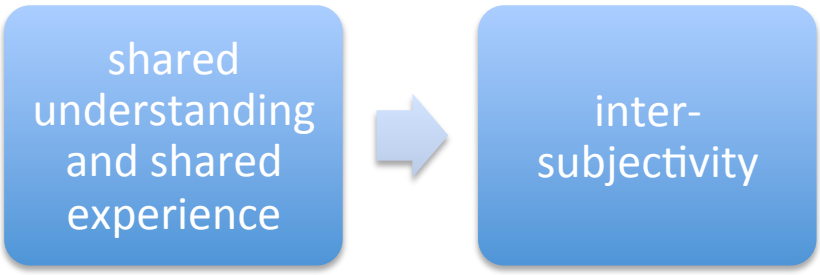


Figure 6.1. Talamo and Pozzi's (2011) view of the sequence of inter-subjectivity

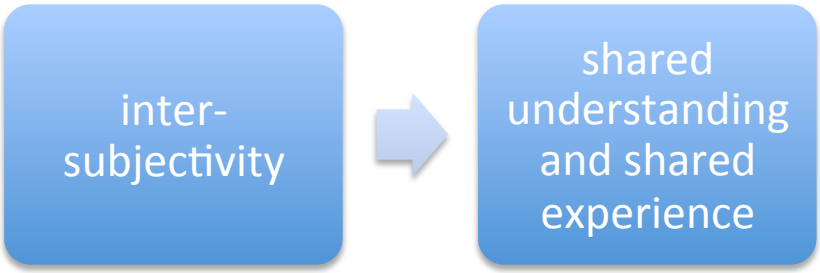


Figure 6.2. Duranti's (2010) view of the sequence of inter-subjectivity

Figure 6.3. My suggested sequence of inter-subjectivity

The positions need not be opposed (either Figure 6.1. or Figure 6.2). They are simply different positions in a larger relational process (Figure 6.3.). Oscar and Camille, Henry and Freddy, could bring the inter-subjective disposition to be open to the encounter, then engage in interaction, build mutuality and understanding, and then construct *further* specific inter-subjectivity relating to each other and the rings in their ongoing dialogue. Of course, awareness of the other may not mean *openness* to the other, as Karen said of her daughter, Ellie who contested the jug with Oscar (5.1.6). Even though one child may be open, the other party may not be. They may or

may not be encountered and brought into the current dialogue. If there was any level of mutuality between Oscar and Ellie it was an example of a dance of discord (Shantz and Hartup 1992).

In some of our episodes we observed the relational complexity as delicate, spun of fragile threads as the children constructed meaning. For example Oscar, Joe and the chalk (5.1.4) were in a dialogue with each other that moved from being together, to the decision to exchange roles drawing with the chalk, just fleetingly sustained, and changed back again. Here *openness* in terms of Duranti (2010)'s condition for understanding through exchanging places at least occurred. *I-It* may transition into *openness* and then into *I-You* relations, although these latter were not completely separate. The relation also made the reverse transition (see Figure 6.4).

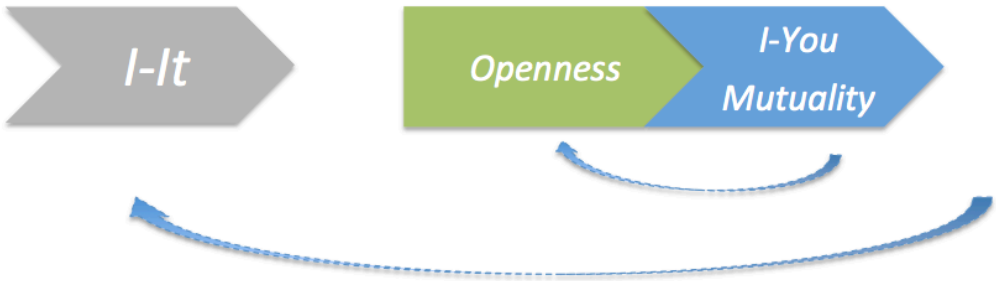


Figure 6.4. The transitions from *I-It* to *Openness* and then *I-You* mutual relations and back.

Buber (1970) makes the significant distinction that *I-You* rather than *I-It* determines the attitude to the other. Therefore within an *I-You* relation, or an *I-You* overtone one may draw or pull the relation back from *I-It*. The children in *I-You* relations were deciding to relate.

6.2 Mutuality

Beyond *openness*, *mutuality* is the second constituent of decisions made with dialogical agency in these episodes. *Mutuality* occurs when there is a transition from *I-It* into *I-You* relations. I go beyond interpreting understanding of the other in the third person to suggest the togetherness and awareness of each child with the others. It could be seen in the second person (Rommetveit 2003; Reddy 2008), as 'we' experiencing together, also evident between Henry and Freddy (5.3.1) celebrating togetherness even in the lyrics of their song. They indicated a direct

awareness of each other and the sense of being together (Schütz 1966; Singer and de Haan 2007). It could be seen as an instance of meta-metaperspective of inter-subjectivity (Gillespie and Cornish 2010) and moving from Fichtner's (1984) second to third phase of inter-subjectivity.

There were particular embodied features of the interactions that indicated *I-You* relations aligning with Buber's (1970) thinking about the whole person being in relation. Oscar (5.1.1) demonstrated awareness of proximity. He called it '*way'* (Transcript 3 Line 4 Appendix VIII) to describe the change between the old focus and the distant position he placed the pole in. It also figured between the new proposed focus of large rings and Camille's current interest when he twice returned to her side to engage with her. He changed proximity first to join in again with the small and then bringing a large ring over to her. She too chooses proximity to Oscar and to engage with the large rings when she walked over to them. I argue that this could be more than solely an instrumental use of distance. The recognition of distance was an indicator of inter-subjective, *I-You* dialogue (Kendon 1990; Hall 1990; Talamo and Pozzi 2011), being aware of the distances and difference of embodied positions builds their relation further. Proximity also characterised Oscar's decisions with Max and the running track (5.1.5), and the fleeting mutuality of Tia in her approaches in the shoes episode (5.2.1). For Tia being with the other children and '*have them acknowledge her*', as Anne said, was more important than what they did or did not do with the shoes.

Rachel, Henry's mother noted how he and Freddy 'kept it going together' as they chanted 'Finished' and sang the sand song (5.3.1). They did many things with sand together. Mutuality was well established in Oscar's experience with Camille and the rings (5.1.1). It formed an overarching decision to relate with her, within which he made decisions to interact involving, and with different spaces and objects, small and large rings. The higher order action is to maintain the relation with the other child and this was the accomplishment of the overarching decision made with dialogical agency, as in Malaguzzi's (1998) relational expediency. There could be lower order actions and even *I-It* attitudes folded in to within the higher order actions as part of decisions (Trevarthen 1979; Searle 1983; Norris 2011; Waermö 2016). The lower order actions and decisions were, for example, the mirroring of vocalisations and use

of proximity that maintained the relation. See Table 6.1 for an example of the hierarchy of decisions in the rings episode (5.1.1).

Higher order decisions	*Lower order/ embedded decisions*
To engage with Camille	To stay with Camille
	To return to Camille
To explore small rings	Different engagements with small rings
To extend the exploration of the rings	Moving the ring holder
	Bringing the large rings to her

Table 6.1 Hierarchy of decisions in episode 5.1.1.

Decisions in action (Searle 1983) could be at the fine-grain level of how to hold the rings to look through, turn or release them. The children seemed attentive to more than one path at a time (Kahneman 1973; Goffman 1974) indicated by how they were paying attention on a longer term as well as immediate paths of action (LaBerge 2002). The participant process chart (see Figure 6.5) depicts the overall relational flow (Gergen 2009) of Oscar with Camille relating to each other while embedded in the flow of a number of intermingling activities within the rings episode. The lower order decisions are indicated for each child. Similarly, relating with different sounds was embedded within both percussion episodes (5.1.2), and Henry and Freddy related with each other and with the affordances of the sand (5.3.1) in a sequence of activities from making the perimeter, burying in sand, to singing and scattering. Rachel noted Henry's punctuations relating to the world for example with a physical spin or bounce, within a continuity of relating to the world with other children, as when they were racing (5.3.2). The map of Tia's dialogue in space with her shoes (Figure 5.15) charts her relational flow approaching various inter-actants.

I-You relations may but did not always, sustain an *I-You* relational tone. In some episodes there was an overtone (Bakhtin 1986:92), or 'constancy' (Buber 1958:115), even when the children engaged in *I-It* attitudes at times. *I-You* has the potential to be more stable than Praglin (2006) allows. The humour in Oscar's interactions with Camille (5.1.1 and 5.1.2) communicated and was interwoven into the continuity of the game and improvised composition. His and her decisions were defined by that mood, in that context. Different tones characterised other decision-making interactions. Henry and Freddy were celebratory (5.3.1), whereas Tia's decisions with the shoes were shy (5.2.1).

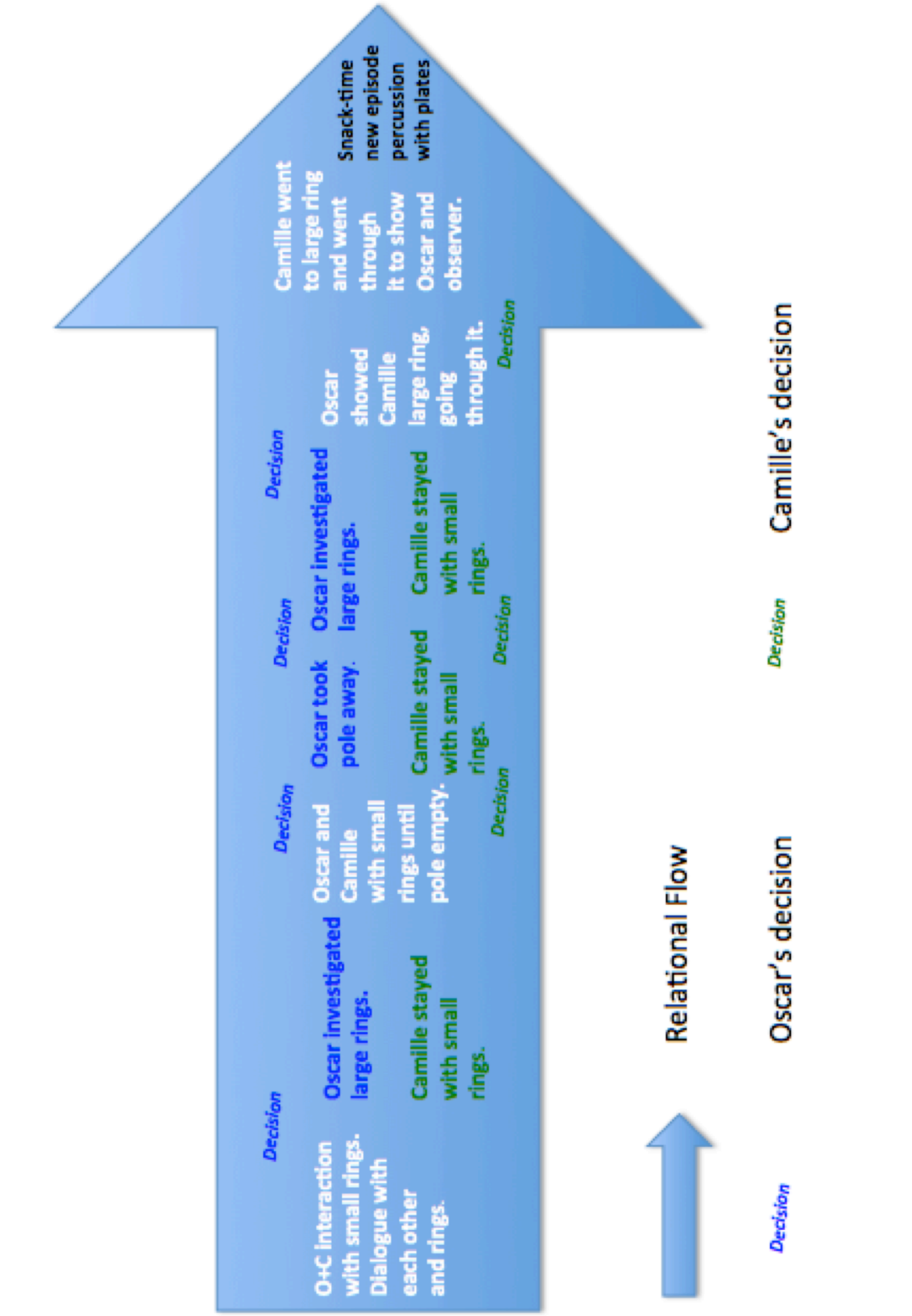


Figure 6.5. Participant Process Chart from episode 5.1.1.

Change was the possibility to change or to remain with a course of action and was part of the response to the other, and therefore part of *mutuality.* It was characterised by the element of surprise (Buber 1970), spontaneity, and improvisation-in-action in *I-You* relations when it was enacted. This was also the impression formed by viewers who do not know the children, but who recognise inter-subjectivity. For example the attendees at EECERA symposia (Lawrence *et al.* 2014) noted the children's responses to unplanned possibilities. Also Trevarthen saw the rings episode as being 'like a spontaneous piece of theatre' (2015). This interpretation was akin to Trevarthen's (2000) explanation of the complex vitality of improvised music-cum-dance-cum-theatre (173) in maintaining inter-subjectivity. In the percussion episodes the multimodal inventiveness diversified from that seen in the rings episode.

Some tones may have helped maintain dialogue when there were decisions to make changes. Spontaneous comedy communicated good-humoured intention and so in itself sustained the rings interaction (5.1.1), by maintaining an equilibrium (Argaman 2015) particularly through transitions points. Similarly, Henry and Freddy (5.3.1) emphasised enjoyment. It was expressed and acknowledged also with the lyrics, 'Forever together', as they created their improvised sand song. Although more shy, Tia enjoyed her dialogue with the dressing up shoes as she created sounds, movements and routes (5.2.1). In contrast her schematic experiments with Jamie and the cars (5.2.2) were characterised by a more anxious as well as an amused tone, but that did not preclude the exploration of change together.

In addition to indicating *openness*, *attention* also maintains *mutuality*. Attention renders the decision relational, because the other has been apperceived and attended to (Kendon 1990:88). It indicates that the other was relevant (Heritage 1984). This may occur through the child exerting some *effort*. *Attention* and *effort* also demonstrate agency in *change* because the focus child was aware of alternatives that s/he could have chosen otherwise, and demonstrated some determination in enacting the chosen course of action, be it to change or to remain on his or her original track. One could interpret deliberateness to some extent in the subsequent action and in the accomplishment of a decision (Lamb 1965). Attention indicates that the children could have done otherwise (Frankfurt 1969; Doyle 2011). In their

parents', and in the practitioners' estimations, they could have used their own initiative and agency to follow other options. The children's attention to alternative courses of action supports the argument that their subsequent actions were decided with dialogical agency and accomplished the decision (Lamb 1965).

Even though attention cannot be verified, in this methodology, it could be interpreted following the expression and response aspects of the phenomenal mind (Norris 2004, 2011). In 5.1.1 Oscar signalled to Camille the shift in focus to the larger rings that was about to happen. In addition to the communicative function we interpreted this gesture as serving to punctuate and help Oscar restructure his own interaction, it was a reorientation for himself, a thought (McNeil 1992). So this pronounced 'All done' gesture functioned in two ways, as ideational and as interpersonal meta-functions (Halliday 1978). Similarly, Norris (2004) sees such a use of a mode as having semantic and pragmatic means, in this case for Oscar's own decision-making, and for his relation with Camille. Gillespie and Cornish (2010) contribute the idea that Oscar is in dialogue with Camille and with himself using two voices and multiple perspectives.

I apply Ruesch and Bateson's (1968) thinking to Oscar's communication about choice. He was communicating what has and what has not been valued and chosen. Oscar had been explicit about what they could have done otherwise. He clearly defined the ring pole and the activity with the small rings as the now de-selected choice, in addition to framing the choice of new activity. The detailed analysis helped explain how Oscar restructured the interaction and what he was choosing to focus his attention on, while remaining aware of Camille and choosing to communicate with her. In contrast Oscar communicated to himself and to Joe (5.1.4) through semantic and pragmatic means that he was not ready to change focus from making chalk marks himself. His parents and key worker interpreted this metaphoric hand twirling gesture as further evidence of how Oscar communicated his decisions, both to himself and potentially the other child. In these circumstances Sarah ventured that he may have gestured that he had not finished just for his own benefit that would be with regard to his own attentional track. However, the hand twirl gesture had been made in the context of Joe's persistence, and therefore he was the likely attentive and intended audience. Oscar's parents recognised the gesture as being one Hannah

used especially when animated to indicate she wanted to continue. This interpretation situated Oscar's communicated decision also within his family culture. When one communicates that one is aware of the other's attention it constitutes a *meta-metaperspective* of inter-subjectivity (Gillespie and Cornish 2010). Oscar was aware of Camille being aware of Oscar, and Oscar was aware of Joe being aware of Oscar. There was evidence of a second-order layer of tertiary inter-subjectivity (Bråten and Trevarthen 2007).

The children demonstrated awareness of each other's experience and of ways to engage in shared experiences. They seemed to regard each other as intentional agents who may have different intentions to their own. At least certain aspects of each other's stream of action were regarded as intentional (Goffman 1974). The children directed attention and this also indicated *effort* to engage with the other. When Oscar used the 'All done' gesture and words he was operating on the *directional* track of attention, indicating the limit for the small rings, and forming the frame for the main *story-line track* (Goffman 1974) to be a shared encounter with the large rings from that point forward. He even increased the visibility of large ring for Camille when he brought it to her. Henry used a physical barrier to direct Billy's track of attention (5.3.2). In the interaction with Layla (5.1.6), Oscar put his phone aside to switch attention to retrieving objects, then in close proximity he attempted to integrate his phone as part of the main story-line in the bed. Tia maintained her interest in her shoes (5.2.1) while encountering the other children in the playground.

At home with his brother Max (5.1.5) repeatedly attempted to redirect Oscar who paid attention to Max's directional track but repeatedly re-joined his own main story-line, namely the running track. Eventually Max re-joined him in dialogue with running. Oscar had redirected attention from the ball and the tortoise back to the 'track' track. Tia flashed her hands to bring attention back to the table as the area for shared action with Lila (5.2.4). These actions optimised experiences to extend the dialogue. The children's decisions formed new, if impermanent, equilibriums (Dreyfus 1996; Merleau-Ponty 2012). No matter however effective the decisions were it was a temporary situation (Rommetveit 2003). For example the rings episode (5.1.1) transitioned into preparations for snack and a percussion episode (5.1.2).

6.3 Extension of dialogue

The third constituent of decisions made with dialogical agency in these episodes is the extension of dialogue. The children *extended* the dialogue to embrace the dialogue with other protagonists while maintaining the original interaction (Goffman 1974; Kendon 1990). Extension may indicate dialogical agency since relational agency tends to expand activities (Edwards and D'Arcy 2004). Rainio's (2010) view that agency is only an escape from the constraints of a situation does not explain all that occurred in an extension of dialogue. Agency could broaden a situation and be viewed as a link to the wider lived experience of the child.

Children could act in diverging and converging ways, extend the dialogue and still build the sense of being in dialogue together. Buber (1970) may have viewed Henry or Oscar's moves towards the straw (5.3.2) and large rings (5.1.1) as *I-It* relations. This would be as if they were moving away from dialogue with Camille and Billy respectively. This is a view echoed by Talamo and Pozzi (2011) who see a centrifugal movement outwards to inter-objectivity and 'the world out there'. In contrast, Latour's (1996) concept of inter-objectivity does not require co-presence for social interaction and invests the large rings with social agency for Oscar with regard to Camille, and the straw for Henry with regard to Billy, as objects the other children could relate to also. The inter-objective quality of Oscar's attention to the large rings in a different area, or the ring pole, did not necessarily remove Oscar from inter-subjective relations with Camille, but was an embedded part in the overall relational *I-You* flow with her. Henry was relating to Billy before he actually reached him with the straw. Relation was not necessarily 'eye-to-eye' (Goffman 1963:95). I shall return to consider dialogue with objects in further detail. For now concentrating on Oscar's relation with Camille (5.1.1), they in the sense of being 'we – together' gave attention to the rings and each other even when they were not next to each other. Although the multimodal interpretations did not give evidence of continuous attention for the other, they did give an interpretation of *continual* attention.

One can allow for some extension and still hold that the dialogue is intact. Oscar and Camille (5.1.1) maintained the interactive space and the 'working consensus' (Goffman 1963). Henry and Freddy (5.3.1) maintained the interactive space throughout the changes of interaction with sand. Tia and Jamie also maintained

theirs in their route around the garden (5.2.5). Although Linell (2009) would place the observer in the fourth 'we' co-ordinate of the dialogical model as a third party, I would allow for the potential for 'we' also to be in the second co-ordinate in an *I-You* relation. The children acknowledged my presence and I acknowledged their presence. At home the parents also acknowledged and were acknowledged by the children. Children included observers in their extended second person dialogue, through their own choice and initiative. Observers were part of the context and the dialogue. For example on occasion when Tia wanted to see the camera, I showed her right then what I was looking at, Anne commented on my presence, '*She did consider and it became part of her decision-making*'. Decisions may also extend to include other actors and these other others are considered next.

6.3.1 Extension of dialogue: space and movement - On occasion decisions were made in dialogue with *space* and *movement* themselves. The relationship to space may be a decision to enter into an *I-You* relation of awareness with the world through experiencing multi-modal sensory participation (Gibson 2000; Filippini and Vecchi 2008; Ingold 2011a). Tia made decisions en route in her itinerary with shoes (5.2.1). She was wayfaring, knowing-as-she-went-along (Ingold 2011a), as she was in her route around the garden with Jamie (5.2.5). Henry's 'round the garden' spin in the straw episode (5.3.2) was a dialogue the surrounding space itself. Of course these embodied dialogues involved *movement*, to spin or click shoes and so on, and these were also decisions to enter into *I-You* relations with the movements. Movement was of the self and beyond the self, it was of the other and in the world (Merleau-Ponty 2004:55). Oscar and Camille (5.1.1) related to the space *inside* the rings that they can move through, and to the movements of the plates (5.1.2). Tia and Jamie met with the movements of the vehicles between them.

The children were in embodied dialogue with running, jumping and bouncing. In Henry's case in particular (5.3.2) he was deciding in relation to the feeling of movement (Davies 2001). Awareness of space occurred in Oscar and Layla's movements between the activities of throwing cloth and paper in the air (5.1.6). We interpreted a deliberate opening of *I-You* relations between Oscar and Barry, that was extended to include their movements with the pens and marks potentially in a multiple *I* (Oscar)-*You* (Barry)-*You* (movement)- *We* (marks people can make)

relation. The Henry, Freddy and the sand song (5.3.1) interaction was a multiple dialogue with movement and space as well as materials, as the sand was dispersed into the air in front of them. It could be set out as: *I-You* (Henry and Freddy together) – *We* (song) -*You* (sand) -Y*ou* (movement of arm and sand) – *You* (space the sand is extending into as it scatters and lands). Similarly, Oscar and Max with the running track (5.1.5) extended to a *multiple* I (Oscar)- *You* (Max)-*We* (what people do on running tracks) - *You* (running)- *You* (Hannah observing)- [and possibly -*You*-(track)] relation. These multiple relations are returned to (Figure 9.2) in the adaptation of Linell's dialogism diamond (2009:95) to include more potential *I-You* relations.

6.3.2 Extension of dialogue: sound - Interpretations of Tia with her shoes (5.2.1), Oscar with the CD music (5.1.3), Henry and Freddy's song (5.3.1), and the percussion episodes (5.1.2) found decisions made in dialogue with sound. Although not visible itself, auditory attention can be linked to the direction of gaze (Kahneman 1973; Kendon 1990) that was employed with intensity by the children. In the percussion episodes (5.1.2) the children's attentiveness to their own innovation and to each others', gave them a repertoire of movements and sounds that they could select from as alternatives when deciding to join or differ from the others. For example, Hannah interpreted Oscar, *'deciding how he wants to make the noise'.* The children's decisions about how to respond to their own and each other's sounds, combined with sounds made by moving their bodies, demonstrated the children's agency.

The dialogues with space, movement and sound could also be maintained along with *I-You* relations with other children in the CD episode (5.1.3) in a multiple *I-You* [child)-*We* (TV and music we know)-*You* (sound/movement/object)-*It* (CD player) dialogue. Oscar, Camille, Henry and Freddy and the percussion participants were making embodied decisions from the potentials to *change*, it was a direct co-presence with the other through and with movements and sounds (Trevarthen 2000, 2009; Talamo and Pozzi 2011). Vocal expressions ornamented the manipulation of the rings (5.1.1), plates (5.1.2) and sand material (5.3.1). The level of inter-subjectivity could be interpreted as *meta-metaperspectives* (Gillespie and Cornish 2010) because they could hear each others' sounds and well as see, and knew the others saw and heard too.

6.3.3 Extension of dialogue: objects, materials and the environment - The difference between using objects in an instrumental *I-It* attitude and an *I-You* relation with them is defined by the open responsiveness in the encounter, the vital manner (Buber 1970). The interpretations were that the children perceived the potential affordance pointing both ways (Gibson 1979). It was the process that mattered, as Hannah explained (Appendix VIII, Transcript 7, Line 39). They were in interrelation with the objects and materials (Linell 2009), they did not merely use them. The sand was animated (5.3.1), the shoes were listened to (5.2.1), the water was attended to in flow (5.2.3). The *I-You* regard was a gearing into the world (Merleau-Ponty 2012) not only gearing into the other child. Tia's world bubble enlarged (5.2.4). Manipulation was a mode practised with intensity in many interactions (Oscar, Camille and rings 5.1.1; Henry, Freddy and sand 5.3.1; and the Percussion episodes 5.1.2). Oscar's dialogue with different rings physically demonstrated Merleau-Ponty's understanding, 'To move one's body is to aim at things through it; it is to allow oneself to respond to their call' (Merleau Ponty 1962:139). Oscar knew how to act bringing his body and world together. At times the children made responses aligned to their perceptions of schemas (Athey 2007). In episode 5.1.1 the rings and pole afforded (Gibson 1979) 'going through' interactions. There were nested contexts for the relation to the rings Gibson (1979:9): 'going through' rings at home; 'going through' boundaries in the setting; and 'going through' *these* rings with Camille.

Jo, Rachel and I interpreted that Henry brought the perception of enjoyable experience of being enveloped in sand on the beach with his dad into his relation with Freddy in the sand pit (5.3.2). When Freddy attended to the sand in their interaction he was partly responding to what Henry made relevant. It could be argued that this was not a dialogue with sand because the response was only on the part of the children. However, here the nature of the engagement was dia - as 'through' or 'by' logos, that is knowledge and discourse (Linell 2009). It was about being interdependent, the intertwining. The objects and materials are perceived to exert a certain comportment of the world towards, dawn on and call upon the perceiver (Wittgenstein 1958; Merleau-Ponty 2004; Flynn 2011). The children interacted with them not only in terms of properties, but also potentially in terms of relations. They became actors in varied ways in the dialogue. This suggestion approaches an extended sense of dialogue (Linell 2009), Lenz-Taguchi's (2010) and

Barad's (2007) intra-action and Buber's (1970) own understanding that one seeks to relate to the world. There can be a dialogue starting from an initial proposal from the objects, and with further shifts of perception, with gaze and with the body, further dialogue with the unfolding affordances in action (Gibson 1979; Gibson 2000). For example the ring (5.1.1) could be engaged with being turn-able, being penetrable, being clear to see through. The rings, by being rings, were in dialogue with the children interacting by holding, seeing, feeling and manipulating them. The sand was in dialogue through being heapable and dispersible. The children engaging with the spray form were taking up the sense scattered across the scattered sand (Merleau-Ponty 2012). That was the mutable extension of the mutuality. The rings were rings before one perceived their properties, not because one perceived their properties, and it was through dialogue that one knew them. The children knew the objects, material and environment though dynamic discourse with them (Buber 1970; Dahlberg and Dahlberg 2003; Bateman 2011). The significance was that children may have perceived a dialogue. Whether or not the objects and environment were actually sentient, the children were communicatively competent within their situation (Buber 1970; Fichtner 1984; Pramling 2006; Merleau-Ponty 2012) and potentially *with* their situation. They were also in dialogue with other people through the objects (Winnicot 1971; Latour 1993).

The potential for an *I-You* relation to the material world was also a question of, to use Buber's word, attitude. That was what made all the difference between an *I-You* relation and an *I-It* relation. The children may have related intermittently to the affordances of the objects and materials as well as to each other, and to all at once. In Fichtner's (1984) reflexive communication, the third and most advanced phase of inter-subjectivity, takes place in the whole situated interaction (1984:226). I do not suggest all the children's dialogues meet Fichtner's requirement for evaluation of the task for this highest level of inter-subjectivity, but at times they did demonstrate awareness from an external point of view. Oscar referred to the pole's hidden position (5.1.1), and his communication suggested at times he was operating beyond the level of objects as 'instruments of cooperation'. Henry and Freddy suggested a view of themselves and of their togetherness in the sand song (5.3.1). Oscar, Camille, Henry and Freddy may well have transitioned between *I-It* and *I-You* relations to and with the rings, and sand, using them to improvise their spontaneous theatre.

Some decisions at different levels were about finding ways of integrating being with objects and environment and with other children in sustained dialogical encounters. Significantly, when the child was involved in an experience and then extended the dialogue open to another child, the prior level of involvement with an object was maintained (Bakeman and Brownlee 1980). This was manifest for example in Oscar and the CD player (5.1.3), and Oscar, Joe and the chalk episodes (5.1.4). The mode of manipulation involved awareness of the other child's experience. Oscar may have had Camille's manipulation of rings (5.1.1) in mind through the embodied relation he had himself to the ring (Merleau-Ponty 2012). This can also be said of Tia and Becky's tipping water (5.2.3) and Oscar and Barry's (5.1.6) energetic drawing.

The objects that the children were in dialogue with in the setting, or those brought into relation through imagination have socio-cultural history. For Linell (2009) objects are re-contextualised 'acquiring different meanings in different contexts' (347). Their affordances may transcend situations as Henry's spoon for mixing gingerbread became a 'straw' and the tongs are part of his experience at the baker's and his experience in nursery. In Tia's dialogue (5.2.3) the dinosaur's jaw that can bite may have become the open mouth to be fed.

6.3.4 Extension of dialogue: Non-presence - Non-present others may be humans, objects, environments, or culture. They potentially occurred in the non-present participant in Oscar's mobile phone conversation (5.1.6), in Tia's phone conversation (5.2.5), in the non-present straw, baker and baker's shop in Henry's imagination (5.3.2), in the beach and his father when Henry was buried in the sand-pit (5.3.1), in Tia's baby sister when she fed the dinosaur (5.2.3), in Oscar and Joe's mother and father when they drew them with the chalk (5.1.4), in the pond and the frogs when Henry transported the log, and the race-track when he transported the container road-block (5.3.2). This cultural reference constituent would also apply to 5.1.3 in Oscar's reference to 'Doctor Who' and 'Justin's House' TV programmes. The people, the Doctor and CBeebies' Justin, may have been related to in particular as non-present others in the shared culture. Tia's exploration tipping water (5.2.3) called into question what was admissible and this gave the name 'we' culture to the theme then applied in other episodes (e.g. 5.1.4).

Such potential extensions to non-present others operated through an enlarged form of perception. The large rings were present to Oscar even when he was with the small ones. It was an actual experience for him. His body was already involved in them. It is like our experience of the back of the house when we are looking at the front in a field-like totality. The objects had a presence for Oscar 'behind his back' (Merleau-Ponty 1962:29). Beyond Merleau-Ponty's (1962) early presumptions of co-incidence and Buber's (1970) insistence on direct co-presence, imagination extends dialogical agency to even more distant non-present others, to the evoked (Stern 2000), and the absent (Sartre 1957). Distant others may be related to through objects (Latour 1996; Winnicott 1971). It may be that the children were not only regarding objects as semiotic resources (Linell 2009) but were also in *I-You* relation with non-present people, objects, environments and the abstract (Wylie 2009). Becky may have related to the rain that had not come. The children also called upon and were called upon by their socio-culture, what '*we*' do: tipping water on the floor; mark-making; sharing things; TV programmes and characters; running on exercise tracks; music and song. The decisions at times embodied entwined experiences of the present and the absent.

The relation with the absent is theorised as potentially felt as direct and therefore dialogical (Schütz 1967; Gibson 1979; Stern 2000; Sartre 2004; Bråten 2009; Aldridge 2014). Henry was in a direct relationship with the tongs and they mediated an indirect one with the non-present cheese straw, or perhaps the spoon and tongs afforded a felt immediacy with the cheese straw, in which case the relation to it would be direct. Oscar called on the non-present Doctor Who to potentially connect with Ian in dialogue. His *openness* to include knowledge of the Doctor was not taken up on this occasion, but his *openness* in relation to the shared culture of CBeebies TV music was reciprocated as all the children recognised the 'Justin's House' reference. Perhaps the open dinosaur mouth and water afforded a felt immediacy with feeding Tia's baby sister (5.2.3). This was without making any claims on the reality of the imagined other, only to say that, like the non-perceptual awareness of others (Gibson 1979), experience of the presence of the other, can be imagined within *I-You* relations.

Contextual social constructionism includes dialogue with the setting, and signs with their contexts (Linell 2009). The dialogue extends to the world of the child beyond the setting. Hannah raised the question of whether the play phone (5.1.6) was a transitional object (Winnicott 1971) for Oscar with home. Anne made the connection between Tia feeding the dinosaur and Elena, the new baby sister at home (5.2.3), and Rachel connected the straw to the experience of going to the baker's shop (5.3.2). The children were connecting to the home lived experience. If the children wished to maintain contact with those others then that suggests more of an *I-You* relationship with the original other retaining its original meaning like an extension of one's own lived concreteness, rather than it being only symbolic (Friedman 1955). The wish for connection (Winnicott 1971) was relevant.

6.4 Summary of theoretical account

The fifth cycle of analysis explicitly folds in theoretical levels of interpretation that are latent in the earlier cycles. The participants had discussed only some of the theory and scholarship in the approach: Buber's (1970) *I-You* and *I-It* relations and Norris's (2004, 2011) approach to multi-modal interaction analysis. The findings emerged from their phenomenological and multi-modal interpretations. In this chapter the findings generated through induction resonate with a deepened theoretical underpinning, some of which evolved after the observations. The findings also provoked a review of the condition for the dialogue in *openness*. The model of dialogism will be reviewed in Chapter Nine.

I propose the following findings on how the children made decisions *in these episodes*: *openness* to the other was the first constituent and the pre-condition of making decisions with dialogical agency. This occurred even when not in obvious self-interest and demonstrated generosity in establishing dialogue, making overtures to, or in responding to others. The most fundamental decision that the children in these cases made was to decide to move into *I-You* relations indicated by *mutuality* with some levels of inter-subjectivity evident. This was the second constituent. There was a range of tones for part or all of the interactions. Children sustained an *I-You* dialogical over-tone, encompassing *I-It* attitudes in some interactions. *Effort* may open and sustain dialogue. The potential for *change* may be part of mutuality indicated by surprise, spontaneity and improvisation. *Attention* to the other, was a

part of *openness* and mutuality. *Attention,* like *effort,* also demonstrated agency because the child was aware of options that s/he could have chosen otherwise.

The *extension* of dialogue was the third constituent. It allows for decisions to be made in dialogue with other others including non-human, spatial, and non-physical elements of the world. Decisions may extend in dialogue with *space* itself. It can be engaged with and made relevant. The embodied decisions were made through dialogical agency in movements, and at times with *movements*. *Sound* is another immaterial potential protagonist. Materiality characterises objects and/or materials themselves as protagonists, and the environment that combines with space, through relating to the whole and affordances of each. By contrast non-present others may be a non-present human, environment, object or the socio-culture. Chapter Eight returns to the critical analysis of these findings.

Chapter Seven

The Development of the Participants' Understanding

In this chapter I present the findings from the second hermeneutic (Giddens 1982) about the development of the participants' understanding through dialogue. I begin by looking at on-going understanding in mutuality. I then discuss the role of refined perception, indefinite interpretation, and the value of open and detailed analyses, before returning to review the participants' research aims.

7.1 On-going understanding in mutuality and flow

Between the participants there was a state of mutuality manifest in the relational ethical regard we held for each other and the children. It was a dialogical understanding that we provided for each other. The mutuality was generated as we went along. As Hannah, Darren and Sarah reflected,

> Sarah: *Every step along the way you* [Penny] *always said this is about all of us.*
> Hannah: *You've sent information beforehand making sure that everybody had a chance to look through it, to have input, to take it away again and think about it. Like you really have valued it rather than it just being done because you feel you have to.*
> Sarah: *We've felt like you wanted it* [the input].
> Darren: *I feel like we have got closer to Penny and Sarah as we worked together on the project. I felt like I could be open and honest without feeling silly.*
> Penny: *I wanted to acknowledge that you know Oscar much better that I do, and so I always felt like I was throwing some ideas out and seeing what resonated with you.*

As parents, practitioners and researcher, we shared the responsibility for revising the initial transcripts of discussions.

> Sarah: *None of it was edited so we could say 'I didn't mean to word it like that, thinking about it that's not what I meant' and we could always go back and change it.*

The parents and staff found they were fully involved when they selected the critical sequences for the detailed analysis,

> Sarah: *You* [Penny] *facilitated it and made it happen in terms of us meeting and having the video prepared. In terms of the discussions I don't think you even spoke at the beginning of it. You'd play the video and wait for us …*
> Hannah: *Wait for us to see what we'd pick up from it.*
> Darren: *I felt it was good that Penny let us watch the footage and pick out bits to focus on first before sharing what she noticed or thought.*

The levels of participation made the research relationship effective rather than tokenistic. The practitioner and parent participants both appreciated the sustained dialogue and deeper thought process in a research partnership**.**

> Sarah: *Research really did strengthen our relationship, it did. The conversations were very different.*
> Hannah: *There were small parts in a long conversation. So instead of 'look at Oscar, he was doing this', we were actually breaking it down side by side. You're having those deeper conversations. Having the time to go deeper, it opens up conversation that we wouldn't have had if the research project wasn't going on.*

Each of the participants was integrating knowledge generated in the study into their on-going fluid understanding. Hannah and Darren, in particular, emphasised their own enhanced abilities,

> Hannah: *Being able to watch Oscar's clips makes me think more about the ways Oscar communicates non-verbally than I would ever normally notice. I think that any extra understanding you can find of your child is always going to be valuable, as it's always something you'll be able to use in day to day life, the more aware you are*.
> Darren: I *think it is valuable for us to be able to see how Oscar speaks with his body language when he is not talking so we can understand him.*

The vocabulary and concepts to interpret multi-modal interactions were absorbed and readily employed.

> Hannah: *It builds on your knowledge. I didn't know a lot of the words, I didn't understand until we were doing it so I learned the phrases and what they mean.*
> Sarah: *Having the language to have the discussion about it.*

In the case of Oscar there was a deepened discussion of his lived dialogical experience.

> Sarah: *Before we may have touched on things like relationships he was developing with other children.*
> Hannah: *or interests*
> Sarah: … *yeah, but not necessarily the cues for how he interacts with others, I don't think we'd have spoken about that.*
> Hannah: *and the interpersonal skills that he's using.*

We referred to the backdrop of understandings we each had. The interpretation rendered aspects of the broader socio-cultural context relevant. For instance, we considered the possible exploration of schema with other rings by Oscar when in dialogue with the setting's rings (5.1.1), Tia's reference to her baby sister (5.2.3), or Henry's to the bakers and the beach (5.3.1 and 5.3.2). In our discussion of Oscar and Barry drawing (5.1.6) I noted the 'voice'-like broader confluence,

> Penny: *It's like we're not only seeing this interaction* [with Barry], *if we zoom out a bit we're seeing previous interactions that are obviously part of Oscar's experience. He looks after his experiences doesn't he?*
>
> Hannah*: He protects them*.

We moved back and forth between the layers of the children's meaning-making, and our own, and back and forth between our own and each other's experiences in a mutual process of observers. Staff in Oscar's setting developed their thinking about whether and how to intervene according to their confidence interpreting the interaction as a continuity of sharing (5.1.1).

> J: *When he did come back Camille's face did light up, didn't it? It was like, "Oh you are coming back to play with me". I don't think I would have stepped in, unless they were both upset.*
> S: *I think I've learned a lot from that because I think I would've done, I would have tried to name that for Camille.*
> E: *and I think the body language of the children as well. You pick up on that don't you?*

The interpretations also placed different emphases as In Henry, Freddy and the sand episode (5.3.1) when Jo and I considered the play ritual of being buried with Henry's father, and the embodied experience respectively. Rachel, having been at the beach brought her own perception to the interaction. She interpreted that Henry brought his perception of being enveloped under the sand himself to the sand in the setting.

> Jo: *It's our knowledge of our experiences in the world that influence our perception of it. This may colour our interpretation of other people's perceptions. It could be Rachel interprets the experience of the play with Dad as something Henry enjoyed and would most likely want to repeat.*

Jo was interpreting how we interpreted our perceptions. The dialogue opened up the process of interpretation.

The dialogue was open to the children's participation. Although their verbal comments on the decisions they had made were minimal because their concerns

were with more immediate aspects of the video such as naming people, they did make interpretations demonstrating a meta-meta perspective (Gillespie and Cornish 2010). The comments of Oscar and Camille (5.1.1) demonstrated that reviewing decisions in mutuality with the children was possible with this approach, but it did not occur for each episode. It required time and perhaps the longer relationship within the research made a difference for Oscar to move beyond the descriptive level (Forman 1999; Kesby 2007).

7.2 Refined perception and indefinite interpretation

At times it was a struggle to move between a direct perception of a state, and the perception of the child's phenomenal mind observed in expressions and responses. For example when interpreting Oscar with Barry drawing (5.1.6),

> Penny: *He wants Barry to see. Ah I'm trying to say what happens, not what he intends. It's quite hard. I think he's showing it to Barry because he's holding it up really close to Barry!*

To resolve this challenge required interpreting in a more subtle and complex way, for example in the discussion about the accomplishment of a decision in the detailed analysis of the percussion episode (5.1.2),

> Hannah: *See him* [Oscar] *frown then. The little girl* [Layla] *started banging hers* [plate] *and he was watching her.* ***There he decided****, 'Do I want to do that'?*
> *Penny: So that could be a moment of decision.*
> Sarah: *It's at that point* ***he decides he's going to join in.***

The points of decision, the actions that accomplished the decision also acknowledged the attention that had been paid beforehand as part of the process.

We valued bringing together different views. The participants were open to interpretations beyond their individual first interpretation.

> Sarah: *I think it helped me to become a lot more in tune with Oscar. I could watch it really closely with you* [Hannah] *and see how you were with him at home and how adults and children were with him in the setting. […] When we were doing the open views, when we were watching the video for the first time, you* [Hannah] *would maybe say, 'Oh I think he was trying to do that' and I'd say, "Do you know I really think he was trying to do that'. Although, quite often it was the same thing that we thought.*

> Hannah: *The video with the water* [Oscar was controlling the flow through hot and cold taps] *and he was saying about fire, we were all trying to interpret it differently as to what he was saying and what he was meaning in the water. You wouldn't have thought about it quite so much without having everybody*

else's interpretation. It's not I'm right and you're wrong, it's 'Oh well he could be doing this and he could be doing that'. […] Having someone else's perspective – seeing that three to four people can have completely different interpretations.

In the chalk episode (5.1.4) self-reflection was triggered by the discussion of the detailed analysis,

> Hannah: *Look how over the top he is with his expressions. I think I'm like that with him sometimes too. I wouldn't have said I noticed that before.*

Jo has become more aware of her own interpretative processes and of the children's awareness.

> Jo: *I was already aware of how I perceive things. I'm more aware of representing how I'm interpreting how children make decisions by discussing all of this.*

This is analogous to seeing the child, interpreting the child and reporting on that interpretation, and then being aware of how that reporting happens, whether in the research or in ongoing observation records in practice.

7.3 The value of the detailed and open analyses

In the detailed analysis the multi-modal transcript provided accessible clarity,

> Hannah: *This* [transcription view Figure 4.7] *links particularly with my research question about seeing the ways in which Oscar communicates with other children. Vocalisation including speech is of course important, and we can see here so are the other modes, of manipulating objects and gaze. We've seen Oscar and his peers using these modes repeatedly. I think you definitely see more of him and you think, "Oh yes, he did do that", and then you slow it down and go, "Wow, look he did that as well!". I think it's just seeing that detail of what maybe going on in his head.*

Hannah's interpretation of Oscar's phenomenal mind was made with fine-grained awareness of how he was expressing and responding. As she pointed out, the children do vocalise but the use of other modes, in this section of detailed analysis (see Figure 4.7) the use of object manipulation and gaze, were comparatively more dense in complexity together with intensity than the use of voice when it was perceived in the detailed view. At other times, such as the chalk episode (5.1.4) (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3), a single gesture could embody significant intensity.

Proximity was a mode used with intensity in Tia's interactions with other children in the shoes episode (5.2.1). Jo noted her awareness of others' space. Anne her mother interpreted this as an alternative to using the English language, '*She has little*

language [English] *so she tries in other ways'*. Tia was speaking with and knowing her environment and the other children. By tracking the mode of proximity, and ensembles of modes, the participants were able to hear her.

Darren and Sarah also appreciated the insights gained from the detailed level of analysis in fixed images and in motion.

> Darren: *It's* [ELAN] *helped a lot because to watch it on the video it seems to me a lot quicker. When you're looking at the pictures you can see a lot more what's going on.*
> Sarah: *Seeing the images frame-by-frame gave me the opportunity to closely observe subtle changes in Oscar's gaze, body language and proximity.*[…] *Detailed analysis revealed subtleties in Oscar's interaction that we had not discussed in the open flow analysis. The co-ordination of the movements between them seemed very clear.*

The analysis changed the participants' sense of time, and the thinking space where reflection can happen,

> Jo: *When I'm assessing children it's so fast, in the middle of everything, compared to this.*
> Rachel: *I'm* [usually] *thinking of Henry and Tom* [his brother] *and a million other things. A million thoughts a minute.*
> Jo: *This is out of time and then back in time.*

Sarah's interest in children's relations when they have divergent intentions was explored. She considered the converging, diverging, then converging interests in the analysis of Oscar with Camille with the rings (5.1.1), '*There were moments when I noticed mirroring of gestures for the first time once looking at the* [detailed] *transcripts'.*

The return to the open contextual view after the detailed analysis kept the children's dialogical agency to the fore. Rachel and Jo noticed the particular drive of Henry.

> Rachel: *I see how much of a person he is in his own right here. I know it but I know it again watching him with you and without his brother.*
> Jo: *Watching now it is very striking how driven they are in so much that they do.*

Anne and Daan viewing together at home also appreciated Tia's tenacity,

> Anne: *She holds on in there for her ideas to work out. We do see that at home.*
> Daan: *A kind of doggedness, determination in a positive way, that's about being who she is. Mostly at home we see it about one thing she wants but watching it now it is part of a bigger picture.*

The fixed and fluid views highlighted the view of the whole experience, not only the component parts of actions and reactions.

7.4 A review of the participants' aims

After the three cycles of participatory analysis we made inferences from our interpretations according to our research interests (see Table 4.1.). Hannah, Darren and Sarah each reflected on their own increased understanding of communicating, sharing, and differences in intentions. Darren had seen how extensive Oscar's sharing was,

> Darren: *I think the rings clip* [5.1.1.] *fits with my interest in Oscar's sharing quite well. He seems to be really enjoying sharing his experience with Camille and taking it in turns with the rings. I had wondered if he was struggling with sharing when he took the pole away. He is just trying to encourage Camille to swap activities.*

Rather than it being a struggle to share, Darren saw Oscar focus on sharing, and really enjoying the sharing, even encouraging Camille to share. Hannah evaluated her original focus on Oscar's communication with other children,

> Hannah: *This clip* [5.1.1.] *makes it clear that Oscar is using so many more ways of communicating as well as verbal communication. I've learned more about the gestures he uses and can interpret them easier to understand his needs. I've been able to see how he uses comedy and sensitivity when communicating with other children, and I feel more secure knowing that he is enjoying his time at nursery with his peers when I'm not there.*

Oscar had a broader repertoire of communication than Hannah had previously realised. The research revealed to her a high level of thoughtfulness, subtlety and skill in his multi-modal communication. Through her understanding of the rings episode with Camille (5.1.1), Sarah evaluated her likely responses to different agendas held by children in the future,

> Sarah: *I think initially I might have actually stepped in to defend her play a little bit. I'm still building a relationship with Camille so I don't know how much she might have asserted herself and said, "No, I'm not finished, Oscar". So I might have said, "Oh Oscar, I think Camille's still busy with the rings", but after watching the video together and having the time to reflect on it and really analysing the facial expressions and body language I don't think Oscar was taking it away to be unkind. I think it was about changing the direction of the play and wanting Camille to be part of that with him.*
> Penny: *So after that process where does that leave you? What would you do as a practitioner?*
> Sarah: *I think we quite often talk about "Watching and Wondering". I think that's what I would have done, stepped back let the children decide for*

themselves where is this game going to go next rather than jumping in. I was not too sure how she felt. She looked really unsure what he was intending to do, and then she smiled. I think if Camille had looked at me I might have offered some reassuring body language or facial expressions, and maybe some words, "Where's Oscar taking it?".

Sarah recognised points in her practice: to allow for child-child dialogue with mutuality and the extension of dialogue and innovation in the play. She reflected on intervention and her own embodied mutuality in the play. Sarah's multi-modal interpretation and understanding led her to value the alternative stepped back less verbal presence while maintaining embodied and responsive relation with the children through her own body and facial expressions. Jo is continuing to process her interpretations differently within encounters with children, and considers their experiences in the moment,

Jo: *I'm now consciously making myself be more aware of the children's decision-making.*

Near the beginning of the research Tia's parents had voiced the question, *'We wondered if children leave her alone because she doesn't understand what they say so she's not so much fun to play?'.* After analysing the episodes of Tia's range of interactions, Anne concluded,

Anne: *She's OK on her own.*
Penny*: She's having a really interesting time on her own. Working a lot with concepts and very fine detailed attention to what she is observing: the absolute capacity of a container. How she can cover surfaces with water or shaving foam.*
Anne: *She has more fantasy than her brother. She can make something other out of it.*

We had developed our understandings of Tia's decision-making in diverse dialogues, and the value of her time seemingly on her own.

The analysis met Rachel and Anne's concerns to know more about how Tia and Henry fared in the setting. Anne saw how Tia balanced her own interests in this context, '*It's interesting. She really seems to be doing her own plan, but she needs the others. […] That's why I'm glad to see her interact'*. Rachel was able to read and appreciate Henry's high level of well-being. In the setting, Henry showed he was making decisions between things he liked, *'It's nice to see and he absolutely loves it. […] He absolutely loves every second that he's here'.*

7.5 Summary of the analysis of the participants' understanding

The participants understanding of decisions made with dialogical agency, and of their own research foci, evolved during the study. There was not a level of understanding to attain and the process continues beyond the thesis period. What is significant is *how* the participants understood through interpreting the lived experience, multi-modal literacy, open attitudes and most significantly in mutuality with the other interpreters.

Chapter Eight

Discussion of the Development of the Participants' Understanding

In this chapter I discuss the findings about the development of the participants' understanding through dialogue presented in Chapter Seven and I follow the same structure. I begin by looking at on-going understanding in mutuality. I then discuss the role of refined perception, indefinite interpretation, and the value of open and detailed analyses, before returning to review the participants' research aims. It answers my second research question, 'How are decisions observed and understood in dialogue?'.

Initially I conceived of a double hermeneutic (Giddens 1982) in this study, one for the interpretation of the children's decision-making processes, and one for the understanding-processes of the adults. In effect, as the study has progressed, it does not seek to separate the two completely. I see the adults' on-going understanding as inextricably a part of their relations with the child, created and enacted through the experience of *being* in relation, just as the children's decisions are in the flow of being in relation. The self-understanding of adults and the agency of children are not separate (Graham and Fitzgerald 2010). The connections between theory and practice are existential (Merleau-Ponty 2012:69; Schwandt 1999). Practical choice applies knowledge (Schwandt 2000:196) and integrates it into the adults' embodied understanding with the children.

8.1 Discussion of on-going understanding in mutuality and flow

Understandings were generated in a process, travelling together in a participatory way (Haw and Hadfield 2011; Kvale 1996), as Hannah, Darren and Sarah reflected in 7.1. Hannah's comment, '*I learned the phrases and what they mean*' (see page 142), is significant because it indicated awareness of not only increasing knowledge, but also how it applied and built understanding (Schwandt 1999). The decisions we observed, how we observed, and how we understood was a to-ing and fro-ing process (Garfinkel 1967; Gadamer 1977; Gergen 2009), not the uni-directional forward projection suggested by the neat diagram of the analytic cycles (see Figure

4.1). There was an holistic view informed by both the details and the holistic views of the video. The whole informed the parts (Merleau-Ponty 2012).

The shared viewing experience of video was a co-present mutual encounter (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez 2000; Heath *et al*. 2010; Merleau-Ponty 2012). It encouraged an *I-You* view with the others who were viewing the children in the flow of their lives (Rotenstreich 1967; Buber 2002). The interpreters acted with shared agency (Trevarthen 2009) as well as the children. Together we were construing knowledge beyond our individual capacities (Richardson 1997; EECERA 2014). It was an ecological generation of knowledge (Malaguzzi 1998). Some of our analysis evidenced the process that Linell explains as, 'the world is necessarily dialogically *appropriated* and dialogically *recognized*' (2009:27). We had accomplished knowing in relation (Schwandt 2000). I recognised the decisions made in the dialogues of the children from within the dialogues with the participants.

I had not sought to create one understanding. We found understanding between our understandings in an inter-subjective second-person approach to each other and the world of the children's experiences (Rubizzi 2001). We did not need to agree on all counts for the adult dialogue to generate understanding. What triggered the connection to the cheese straw in Henry's experience (5.3.1) was the spoon in Jo, the practitioner's, interpretation, or finding the tongs in Rachel, the parent's. That the staff team discussed diverse interpretations of Oscar's interaction with John (5.1.3) suggests dialogue helped maintain an open mind regarding the children's decisions (Dahlberg and Dahlberg 2003). As with the children, there was *openness* leading to a process of mutuality between the adults. It also opened up the process of interpretation to deeper understanding.

8.2 Refined perception and indefinite interpretation

Indefinite interpretation (Dahlberg and Dahlberg 2003) may not be problematic if each person's understanding is accepted as his or her own (Gergen 1991; Richardson 1997; Reed 2006; EECERA 2014). Each advance in understanding is to be appreciated, given the inherent difficulty. There was also the challenge of interpreters perceiving both the signified directly and the signifier, as Merleau-Ponty (2012) perceives anger, not only the angry gesture. Although not all the interpreters were in each situation, there had been a shared interpretation from the video with an element of direct perception. Through concentrating on the phenomenal aspects of mind, the

children's attention was prioritised. This served the understanding of the stage of decision-making when the children were paying attention to alternatives, aware that they could do otherwise. The phenomenological interpretations of *openness*, attention, potentials for and subsequent actions identified potential accomplishment and the culminating moments of the decision-making process. Understanding involved the child's experience and the interpreters' gearing in based upon his or her previous experiences (Merleau-Ponty 2012). The participants' shared knowledge of the children's schematic interests (Athey 2007) is a good example of this (5.1.1). There were instances of Iedema's (2014) transformation in perception seeing back across the participants' knowledge and seeing it anew, as Hannah saw Oscar and herself in their exaggerated expressions (5.1.4.).

If interpretation is viewed as a skill, the adult interpretation also may be made with increasingly refined perceptions (Goodwin 1994; Dreyfus 1996; Merleau Ponty 2012), and may function with more collective reflective communication (Fichtner 1984). Jo and Rachel had reflected on a shift in how they perceived through discussion. Sarah connected her perceptions to her potential for different pedagogic responses. As a result of the dialogue, Jo in particular (7.2) was considering tiers of perception and interpretation (Schwandt 2000), and through dialogue she was more aware of how she represented this. The layers of awareness are in set out in Figure 8.1.

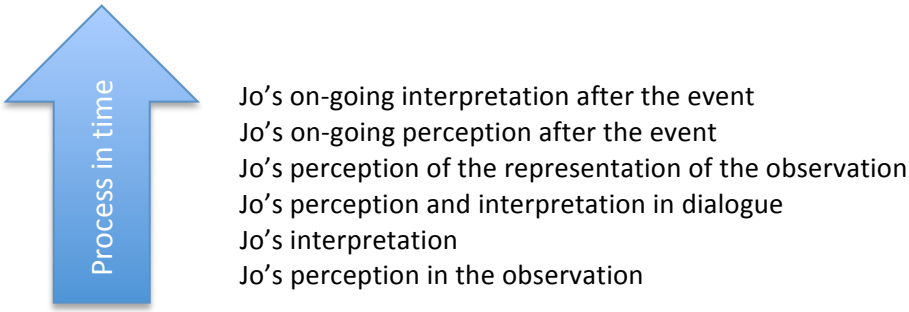


Figure 8.1. Jo's tiers of perception and interpretation

Dialogue opened up the processes between acquaintance with the child and description (Russell 1905).

8.3 The value of the detailed and open analyses

Overall, the analysis rooted the interpretations in existential considerations, how was the decision-making experience for *these* children, in *these* situations. The layered interpretations tuned into the awareness of being with the other when that seemed to occur between the children. As a melody determines how one may perceive a note set in that melody, attention brought out what was there all along when one broke down the whole into parts. The experience was not partial, the experience of the other child, or of aspects of the rings, or sand were not 'abstractable' from the experiences themselves. It was the existential phenomenological experience of the whole that determined what counted as meaningful, added quality to the parts. For example, in Oscar's interaction with Joe and the chalk (5.1.4), layered interpretations considered where Oscar's attention was interacting with Joe, and the observer. Yet his own mark-making was still of intense importance to him. The interpretation could not have placed his attention to me as observer as being in the fore-ground (Norris 2004, 2011) and of more significance than his marks behind him (Merleau-Ponty 1962), even though in the detailed analysis his posture and gaze were orientated towards me with apparent modal density. The holistic view gave a weighting to the marks he concentrated on overall, not only where his attention seemed to be in any one moment. The multi-modal expression and response of the children was understood in terms of alternative languages (Malaguzzi 1998; Goodwin 2016; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001). Hannah's enhanced understanding of modal density highlights the primacy of other modes than language (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001). She also perceived the high modal density that for Norris (2011) indicates the focused action that may be involved in a decision. Anne appreciated Tia's multi-modal communication when not using Dutch or English.

Multimodal transcription is not new. (Cowan 2014; Flewitt 2006). What differentiates this study is the approach to understanding of the dialogical nature of the decisions being studied and the dialogical nature of the interpretation. Although one inevitably made a first interpretation (Kress 2012), one did not have to fix on the first interpretation. The combination of these fixed and flowing analyses allowed access to lived experience without automatically immediately judging it, partly because one knew one could look again. Through cycles of analysis the process of understanding slowed down (Dahlberg and Dahlberg 2003:48). The challenge of such prolonged

indefiniteness is not underestimated. For Merleau-Ponty (2004) nothing could be harder than describing direct experience when it is indeterminate, and suggests that slowing down everyday perception can stabilise it (58).

Parents and practitioners had different levels of engagement with theory, but they engaged fully with the epistemology and methodology, through dialogical analysis of the sources of their knowledge. They demonstrated a high level of inter-subjectivity in their own reflection (Fichtner 1984) about *how* they were trying to know. They represented themselves in research presentations to settings and at European conferences (Lawrence *et al.* 2014).

8.4 The development of understanding beyond the pilot

The participants came to place more emphasis than in the pilot study on the achievement of the children maintaining interactions within which they demonstrated dialogical agency. Maintaining relations was a decision. For example, in the pilot we studied Oscar's interaction with Max in the garden (20 months). We interpreted movements and gestures that communicated dissent, and control in movements and gestures that effectively stopped Max's initiative,

Hannah: *He seemed quite happy that he'd asserted himself.*
Sarah: *… and that Max had listened*

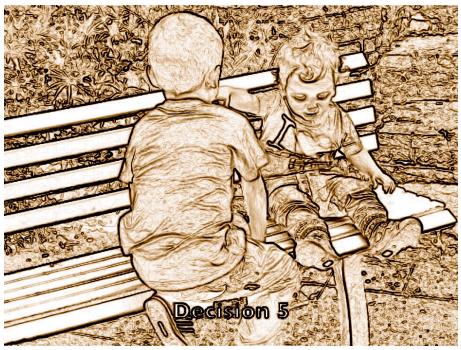


Figure 8.2. Oscar makes a gesture, postural change and breaks eye contact.
Figure 8.3. The effect is to keep Max at a distance

Since the pilot study participants' perception and interpretation has shifted towards viewing the overall relation between the children. For example, Oscar used proximity to set terms in dialogue, to persist in one situation and avoid being pulled into another. He was interpreted and accommodated by the older child (see Figures

8.2 and 8.3), and they continued together. In our interpretation of Oscar and Max with the running track Oscar successfully maintained the quality of interaction on the main attentional track of his choice. He decided with dialogical agency, 'working in partnership', as Hannah put it (5.1.5).

8.5 A review of the participants' aims

Sarah was coming to an understanding of difference of agendas (Buber 2002) that she sought. She understood differences still to be within dialogue, and advanced an embodied dialogical response as a practitioner. Darren and Hannah came to deeper understandings of sharing and communication respectively. Rachel appreciated Henry's lived experience in the setting. Jo valued the levels of understanding she had attained of perception in observation and interpretation. She intended to make an effort to maintain this level of understanding.

Tia demonstrated her choice of who to interact with (Wood 2014). She chose not to always interact in dialogue with other children when she was already engaged in dialogue with objects and the environment. Tia may have been in dialogue in her 'bubble' when she was on her own, with materials and possibly with other actors in her imagination. Beyond creating time and space for herself as Markström and Halldén (2009) suggest, Tia was potentially making decisions in dialogical agency with space and with non-humans. Her verbal non-engagement could be appreciatively interpreted as 'interactional competence' (Silverman, Baker, and Keogh 1998), rather than a deficit in communication in spoken English.

We could not weigh up all the factors that Tia may have been responding to. Nevertheless, analysing aspects of the phenomenal mind provided some evidence in response to Tia's mother's query about what was a decision and what was the power of suggestiveness. Staff and parents both created an environment that in itself communicated with the children. While mediating resources were not neutral, their affordances point towards the children (Gibson 1979), still options remained for Tia to have done otherwise. Even while promoting certain selections, the culture both at home and in the setting also communicated that she was expected to have the agency to choose. Tia was also in a broader dialogue than initially perceived, one that went beyond limitations of her use of the English language. Henry, with well-

developed spoken English, and Tia, with emerging English as an additional language, were understood and appreciated by their parents through their enhanced interpretation of their multimodal communication. This study highlights the decisions made with dialogical agency that the children made in these social and spatial contexts.

8.6 Summary of the discussion of participants' understanding

The participants understanding of decisions made with dialogical agency, and of their own research foci, developed during the study. They knew how knowledge applied. The understanding was co-constructed in a to-ing and fro-ing process. It was dialogically appropriated and *recognised*. The dialogue also helped to maintain an open mind regarding the children's decisions. The interpreters perceiving the experiences themselves through the sharing of video presented a challenge. Through concentrating on the phenomenal aspects of mind they stayed close to children's perceptions as well as gearing in based upon their previous experiences. There was also diffraction of participants' perceptions as they saw what they thought they knew anew. Arguably their perceptions also became increasingly refined perceptions, and they developed understanding of layers of perception and interpretation. Dialogue had opened up the interpretative processes. The process of understanding had slowed down everyday perception and stabilised it. Participants demonstrated a high level of inter-subjectivity in their reflection. They Intended to maintain this level of understanding of observation and interpretation.

Chapter Nine

The Evaluation of Understanding about Decision-making in Two-Year-Olds

In this chapter I analyse the understanding of the decisions made with dialogical agency by the children in these cases. I begin by considering the accomplishment of decision-making with dialogical agency and the dynamism of decisions moving in and out of relation. Then I discuss how the constituents contribute to understanding of decisions. I conclude the chapter with the adaptation of Linell's (2009) diamond model of dialogism to represent this understanding. This chapter addresses my first research question, 'How are decisions made in dialogue in the children's lived experience?'.

9.1 Decisions made with dialogical agency

The findings identify decisions made with dialogical agency when the children paid attention to the potentialities reaching throughout a socio-cultural-material world, and made commitments to action. They made decisions to be in dialogue, and at times to extend the dialogue.

Buber considers that moving into an *I-You* relation indicates free will and the capacity to make a decision (1970), and that this decision is made while being in an *I-You* relation. Significantly, I was not applying this thinking while making the observations and interpretations. I returned to Buber's theory to find this aspect resonates with the findings in this study. Children decide with dialogical agency to make decisions with dialogical agency. This is the import of *openness* and the maintenance of interactions in mutuality. When there is *openness* and then it is reciprocated the adults can know something of this move into *I-You* relation. Of course other interpreters may take the same evidence and come to other conclusions.

There was an equilibrium between the children's own interests and relating to others. They were making choices that maintained not only their individual integrity (Markström and Halldén 2009) but also their relational integrity (Buber 1970). We interpreted Henry's proposed traffic block (5.3.1) differently to negotiations of power

relationships (Wood 2014:13). We offered a view of Henry making dialogical overtures and attempting to sustain relationship. Such *openness* was not necessarily solely for the child's own purposes, as in the episode of Tia's redistribution of shopping to the other children (5.2.4). I recognise decisions as potentially random, but also as potentially made voluntarily in dialogical responses (Doyle 2011) to the calls on perception from others, objects and the environment. It was the children who made the calls relevant.

Refined perceptions and confidence are not necessarily a function of time and maturity, they may be indicators of learning through socio-constructivist processes. There may be more refined perceptions as children and adults master certain skills (Dreyfus 1996). When discussing Henry being buried in the sand (5.3.1) his key worker, Jo, saw how his experience of the beach refined his perceptions of the sand-pit in the setting and the potential play within it.

The children's autonomy and competence was evident in the effect they could have on the environment in response to it (Wood 2014) as when Henry made a road-block (5.3.2). Furthermore, when children perceived agency the perception may have had an agentive property in itself (Reunamo 2007), as when Oscar stopped and started the music (5.1.3.). Decisions made with dialogical agency would support, therefore, further decision-making (Doyle 2011). The evidence that the children paid attention to alternatives, they could have done otherwise, as part of the attention, intention and commitment to action process (Lamb 1965) indicated that a decision could be made with dialogical agency rather than as a reaction. For example when Henry chose to have his own body buried rather than the objects in the sand pit (5.3.1).

Openness and *change* in improvisation and spontaneity could sustain an interaction rather than allowing it to falter when there was a mismatch of response between children. They could demonstrate a high level of *effort* and determination to maintain mutuality. The literature review established the metaphor of decisions seen as steps in the dance of relatedness with other children. Using Kimmel's (2009) terminology Oscar amplified his signal about the large rings in his *effort* to extend the dialogue. In addition to Kimmel's options, extending the dialogue may include the divergent actions of others. In the percussion episodes (5.1.2) the children built on and continued each other's movements and sounds. They folded them in. The

continuous responses to the sensing of the other's responses in action were shared agency (Trevarthen 2009).

Decisions can be made in the context of short or extended *I-You* relations, and in the context of simply attuned or more complex and intense reactions in the interaction. Kimmel's (2009) cascade of alternatives represented only one pair of protagonists in inter-subjectivity. In decisions made with dialogical agency, the *effort* to and the probability of sustaining the interaction with multiple protagonists was even more challenging and could be regarded as even more of an accomplishment by the two-year-old children in this study.

9.2 The dynamism of decisions seen in the fix and flow, and the moving boundary between *I-You* and *I-it*

I consider the qualitative shift, the transition from an *I-It* to an *I-You* relation to be the most fundamental decision made with dialogical agency (Buber 1970:103). At times the children crossed the boundary between these relations back and forth. Oscar moved between closed *I-It* relations with the other children and the CD player and open *I-You* relations between the children, the music and the dance (5.1.3). At other times, for example, with Layla and the phone in bed (5.1.6), Oscar maintained two relational flows, one with his phone and potentially an imaginary non-present other, and the flow following different activities with Layla. In the straw episode, Henry's turning and bouncing to punctuate other interactions (5.3.2) shifted into a different embodied dialogue with the environment, and back to dialogue with the other children. Tia changed focus within relational flow that was geared predominantly into a dialogue with the *shoes*, the *space*, *surfaces* and *sounds* (5.2.1), but encompassed *openness* in her approaches to other children. The experiences of young children at home and in settings, and the adults interpreting them were in on-going flow. The *I-It* / *I-You* boundary does not exist in a fixed ordered position within relations. It is part of the relational flow. The *effort* that the children exerted at times to establish *mutuality* indicated how these are decisions made in dynamic and complex situations.

9.3 Constituents of decisions made with dialogical agency

The limitations of the constituents are acknowledged in the summary for Chapter Five and the introduction to Chapter Six. The constituents were essential aspects of *these* decisions made with dialogical agency in *these* circumstances. An accomplishment of the study has been to stimulate attention to possible ways of experiencing the world so that the parents, practitioner and I as the researcher, could be drawn into the children's lived experience (Keen 1975; van Manen 2011). Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) are confident that the findings generated through contextual imaginative variation would hold in other situations. I view the generation of constituents as part of the process of gearing into the children in these episodes, not the end point, and do not propose further application.

The analysis contributes the finding that the adults are able to maintain a non-instrumental regard for the children. Similarly, it is possible that the children did not objectify all in their experience (Buber 1970; Husserl 2001). The children could, for example, find a schematic pattern between rings and still be in a dialogue with the objects, even as they conceptualised them, the spaces they inhabited, and the spaces that inhabited the core of the rings (5.1.1). It was not a case of direct relation preceding separate conceptualisation. The children were there with the rings, not added afterwards (Sartre 1957). The attitude of the children was not limited to attributes because they potentially engaged with the intertwined agency of the objects and materials (Merleau-Ponty 2004).

According to Buber the *I-You* relation is directly between *I* and *You* (singular) and each occurrence is not involving others. Our research groups did interpret the children's decisions made in dialogue in and with the world. The process of understanding did not need to exclude extended relations either in the experience of the children or the participants' interpretation. I do find a way to access dialogue so missed by Sweetman (2001) and Marcel (1984). We also considered *I-You* relations, in the *in-between* space with drawing, culture, and imagination as looked for by Praglin (2006**).** My study sits alongside Rainio (2010) in that I too consider agency to be contextual but I emphasise child-chosen decisions. Like Wood (2014) I emphasise *how* choices are made and go on to propose how we can interpret it. I also align with Murray's (2016) thinking, but with a greater emphasis on *dialogical* agency and with

younger children. My focus differs from Murray's in that my emphasis on meta-perspectives is not only cognitive. Also, how the child engages with peer perspectives as well as maintaining personal integrity is integral to a dialogical interaction, and are not only potential features.

The phenomenology of Buber's *I-You*, would not allow for us to confine it with concepts that one can apply to *I-It* relations, such as a fixed list of attributes or constituents. One can only make meaning in each interpretation (Robinson 1991). The participants explained their own extended and on-going understanding of decisions made in dialogue (7.1). For example the findings indicated surprise along with *change* and spontaneous innovation as an indicator of mutuality in decisions in these episodes. This also resonates with Buber's (2002) emphasis on the unpredictable. However, some children's decisions and adult interpretations happen in routine situations, not only in novel ones (Betsch and Haberstroh 2014). If change and surprise were indicators of I-*You* relations, they may not preclude routine decision-making with dialogical agency. Routine decisions could still be made with an attitude of spontaneity and responsiveness to the other.

9.4 The development of the model of dialogue

The theoretical frame extends to decisions in the world in dialogue with many potential others in each encounter. It may extend to others who are not human (objects and the environment), or others who are not physically present but may form part of the child's perception of felt immediacy. Departing from the restrictions of Buber opened up an infinite horizon, Bakhtin's 'boundless world' (1986:143). The frame was determined by as many '*you*'s as were made relevant. The expressions and responses of the phenomenal mind cannot provide evidence of the non-present, but the adult interpretation of them could. The important perception was how the affordances of the other may have presented to the children. The findings allow for awareness, *openness*, participation and at least the potential of mutuality with these other others rather than an automatic assumption of an *I-It* relation.

As an outcome of the findings I propose three adaptations of Linell's (2009) dialogism diamond model (see Figure 2.2). Firstly, Linell has bi-directional arrows between coordinates denoting dialogue between each constituent. This study contributes

observations of the transition into relatedness. To acknowledge and represent this potential shift from an *I-It* attitude to an other (object or human) to an *I-You* relation (and back) as a dynamic connection I suggest a differentiation of reciprocity in the arrows: to have bi-directional ones when there is an *I-You* regard, since this is dialogical; and uni-directional ones when there is an *I-It* regard (see Figure 9.1).

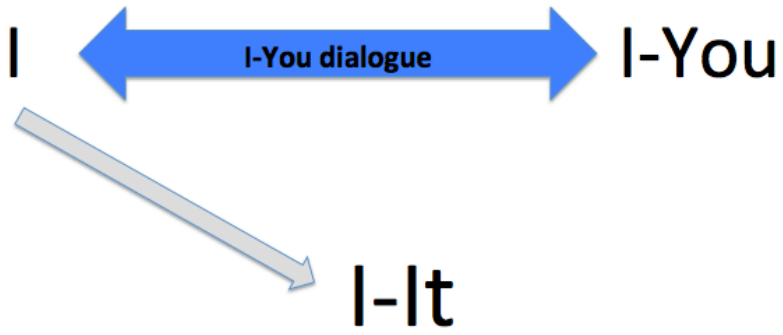


Figure 9.1. The *I-You* relation indicated by a bi-directional arrow and a uni-directional arrow representing an *I-It* attitude

Secondly, I would recognise *I-You* relations in the *extension of dialogue* with the world. The change of attitude re-categorises the person or object from the Object/*It* to the *You* coordinate. The adapted model is set out in Figure 9.2. Linell has recently started including relations with the world in 'Extended Dialogism' (Linell 2016b). Linell and I disagree on the question of *I-You* regard for absent others, for example the child's regard for absent people when pretending to telephone them (5.1.6 and 5.2.5). Linell (2016a) maintains the absent parent's position remains in the fourth, socio-cultural '*we*/one' coordinate. I consider the nature of the regard for the other should be the defining consderation. Therefore the relation with the absent person could be dynamically represented between the *I* and the *You* coordinates also. As '*You*'s are made relevant they can be re-positioned from the third and fourth coordinates into the second *You* coordinate in dialogue. When there is an *I-It* attitude to present persons or objects they may remain in the diamond in the *It* coordinate, and to an absent, third party or generalised others they remain in the *We* coordinate. My thinking is that an immediate situation may appear at first to be monologistic, but if interpreters take account of the wider situation there will be dialogical elements, cultural voices and so on that are in play and they could move into the second *You* coordinate depending on the regard the children had for them.

The third additional aspect to the quadruple model is the transversal overtone. Linell situates dialogue within a dynamic space and time dimension (2009:95). The findings of this study suggest that for periods of time the interactions may be characterised by a particular overarching tone, an *I-You* overtone, even when the child moves between *I-You* and *I-It* relations.

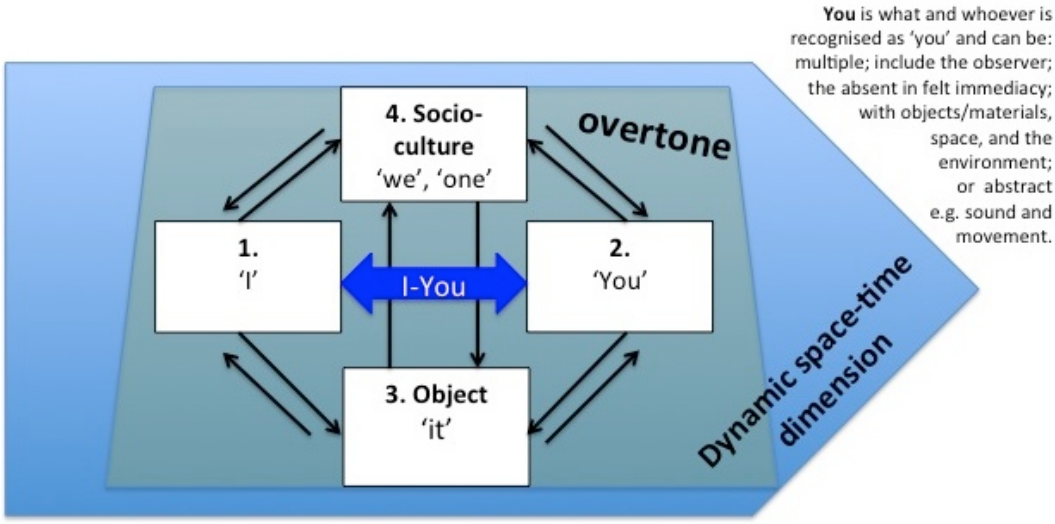


Figure 9.2. Adapted dialogical diamond model. Adaptation of co-ordinates and arrows from Linell 2009 (see Figure 2.2)

Figure 9.3 demonstrates the application of the adapted dialogical diamond model in the example of the Oscar, Camille and the rings episode (5.1.1.). In this instance there was an overtone of humour. The strong *I-You* relation was between Oscar and Camille throughout and potentially extended to the rings, space in the rings, movements with the rings and to the observer. Arguably there was an instrumental *I-It* attitude to the pole and the distance used to remove the pole. The conceptual engagement with the schema of 'going through a boundary' can be positioned in the fourth 'we' coordinate as shareable cultural knowledge.

All *I-You-We-It* coordinates are involved in the decisions made with dialogical agency in the context. The adaptations represent the nature of the relations that are involved. The quadrant allows one to distinguish between Oscar relating to the ring (second '*You*' coordinate), explaining the ring (third '*It*' coordinate), and the social and semiotic means to express and understand the content, (the fourth co-ordinate) (97). In other examples the shifting attitude may position others in different coordinates at different times. So, for example, in Henry and Freddy and the sand

(5.3.1), the sand may have been in the third Object/*It* coordinate when it is marking the perimeter of the pit, or related to as *I-You* when it became the beach burying Henry's body, or became a cloud dispersed in the air. The 'together' song reinforced mutuality in the second coordinate, but it was also potentially a cultural reference in the fourth coordinate. Similarly in the episode with Oscar, John and Ian and the CD player (5.1.3), the 'Justin's House' music could be positioned both in the fourth coordinate as a cultural reference to the BBC CBeebies TV show, or in the second coordinate when regarded relationally and danced with. John was apparently held in different regards, and could have been in the *I-You* second coordinate, the third *I-It* coordinate, and there was *openness* for he and Oscar to re-establish the *I-You* relation again and for him to return to the *You* co-ordinate (see Figure 9.3). In the shoes episode (5.2.1), Tia's strong *I-You* relations were with shoes, space, and are more tentative with the other children. The shoes also occupied a position in the fourth coordinate because dressing-up shoes are something 'we' wear dressing up in the setting culture. Other inhabitants of the fourth coordinate were the absent baker and straw at the baker's shop in Henry's straw episode (5.3.2), the parents in Oscar's mobile phone (5.1.6), in Oscar and Joe's chalk drawings (5.1.4), and Tia's baby sister, Elena (5.2.3). Each of these broader contexts could be considered to have a role in the dialogue with potential to be regarded as *You* in the second coordinate.

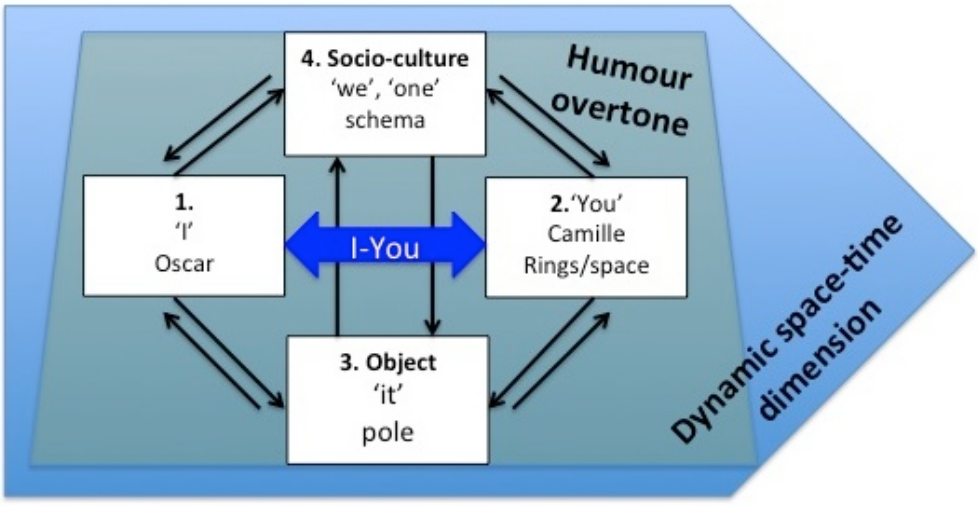


Figure 9.3. Adapted dialogical diamond for the Oscar, Camille and the rings episode (5.1.1) after Linell (2009) see 2.2.2.

9.5 Summary of understanding about decision-making in two-year-olds

The participants and I have understood some aspects of how children made decisions with dialogical agency that have previously been considered unknowable. The understanding has accessed the distinctive other way of knowing (Friedman 1955) namely *I-You* relations in decisions, and the decision to be in *I-You* relations. The dynamism of decisions moving in and out of relation has been observed even if the exact experiences of the children are not proven. Their dialogical agency has also been examined and constituents have contributed to this understanding in these cases. The adaptation of LInell's (2009) diamond model of dialogism represents the nature of, potential for and dynamism of decisions made with dialogical agency.

Chapter Ten

A critical analysis of the implications of the knowledge generated for practice with under-threes in professional education and care settings.

In this concluding chapter I summarise the answers to the research questions:
1) 'How are decisions made in dialogue in the children's lived experience?'. This section summarises the theoretical developments.
2) 'How are decisions observed and understood in dialogue?'. This section of the concluding chapter addresses the broadest implications of how dialogical agency can be interpreted and understood, of welcoming indefiniteness, mutuality and awareness, and of a shifting world view.
3) 'What are the implications of the understanding generated for practice with children under the age of three in professional education and care settings?'. This section addresses the enactment of understanding that is situated in professional dialogue. It also considers responsiveness and the implications of multi-modal interpretation.

10.1 How decisions are made in dialogue in the children's lived experience

The decisions have been understood as processes of awareness. Such attentive deliberation reveals the social competency of two-year old children in an appreciable new light. The evidence has been what the child paid attention to and responded to in the interaction with the other children. The interpretation of evidence has been that the children recognised their world dialogically, and made decisions through this recognition. I extend the theoretical thinking beyond the participatory cycles but it relates to the understanding of the participants. The process of dialogical analysis moved in a direction first and then this was later recognised in theory. Learning happened in a cyclical way. The research team around Oscar formulated a triadic relationship *I-You-It* to represent the different relations in dialogue in the episode with the CD player (5.1.3). Then the broadening of the theoretical underpinning to the dialogism meta-theory allows a wide perspective including triadic and quadruple models that correspond to the research analysis. The phenomenological multi-modal interpretation opened up the interpretation of how the children made decisions

while recognising a range of potential others, and an interpretation of which others may have been relevant. It not only situated the children in their contexts, but also how they may have been in embodied dialogue *with* their contexts including the relations with the other children. The relationship with objects and the environment came into greater prominence during the thesis study. It was not a major consideration when I set out. The study also understands the potential of dialogue with the non-present within the felt immediacy of the children's decisions.

I adapted Linell's (2009) diamond model of dialogism to allow for the above developments. Although Marková (2016) maintains that socio-culture, or the 'we' relations should be absorbed *between* the coordinates in a triadic model, I argue the dialogism model should represent the fourth 'we' co-ordinate. From the fourth, 'We' can be brought into the *I-You* coordinate. I develop Linell's (2009) model to go even further to represent the shift to the *I-You* relation between coordinates. *You* is not only there in the particular coordinate, but involved in the relationships between all the coordinates. The adaptation takes any *others* that one is interested in and shifts them between different coordinates in the model through the change of regard. The relevance accorded to the other can change the status of the other in the dialogue to *I-You* and back to *I-It.* There are these different '*you'*s populating a whole situation even if the dialogue is metaphorical, 'as if' the other were a *you*. They may appear in the cultural coordinate and they can appear in the object coordinate as well when they are treated as objects. Any potential other is interpreted according to the relevance enacted in the children's interaction, and the relevance in the adult's interpretation. The extension of dialogue to other others who could be *related with* and not only *referred to*, broadens the cast of protagonists who may move into the *You* coordinate of the adapted model beyond humans present in the situation and beyond the immediate whole being in direct dialogue (Buber 1970; Merleau Ponty 1962). The broader vision conceptualises situated and related beings making decisions that include the non-present, objects and the environment (Schütz 1967; Sartre 2004; Filippini *et al.* 2008; Olsson 2009; Wylie 2009; Lenz-Taguchi 2010; Malone 2016; Taylor *et al*. 2016;) in movement (Gibson 1979; Ingold 2011b), and in the flow of activities (Gergen 2009). I recognise, and have built on the above understandings.

The representation of how the regard for the other may shift in between the relations contributes understanding beyond the existing abstract models. This has implications in theory at a time when models in dialogism are being reviewed and may be applied in future empirical research (Linell 2016a; Marková 2016). The adapted model articulates the fundamental decision to enter an *I-You* relation, as well as indicating the potential others with whom the children decide to make decisions.

That I-*You* dialogical relations may switch to *I-It* monologistic attitudes and back, yet still cast an overall dialogical relational tone is a transversal accomplishment. *I-You* can be both continuous and discontinuous. There is a threshold demarcating one from the other as Buber (1970) states. However, there is also no break if, over time, a relation is sustained. The potential overtone within which decisions are made, is another dynamic addition to Linell's (2009) quadruple dialogical diamond model. It may combine with a particular sustained tone such as humour (Figure 9.3).

Adapting a model may make it less clearly abstract. Representing the dynamic of changing attitudes is a contribution of complexity. Questions and further uncertainty that arise from complexity may be welcome if they advance further research and understanding. The model is a representation of what the children could perceive, and what could be perceived, interpreted and understood by the observers who are also in dialogue. The axiology of the understanding identified in the analysis has to be based in the perception of the adults in their on-going relations, and the perceived potential benefits to the children that their experiences are being understood.

10.2 How decisions are observed and understood in dialogue: Evaluation of the approach

10.2.1 Welcoming mutuality, indefiniteness and awareness in understanding

The knowledge generated in the analysis is an answer to Schwandt's question, 'how do you know that?' (1999:452). This section aims for understanding as an answer to Schwandt's second question, 'what do you make of that?' (1999:452). The primary outcome for the adult interpreters is that the analysis supports a broader ontology and epistemology than Buber first allows. He maintains the solitariness of the *I-You* relation and refutes the possibility of coming to an understanding of *I-You* with

others (1970:83-84), whereas the adults interpreting these episodes understood *I-You* in others through dialogue with others.

An existential experiential approach has been constructed in this thesis in an on-going ethical relationship that fuses knowing and being. I am attentive to the flow and history of relationship between child participants in an interaction, and researcher and adult participants in a research project. This core responsiveness and responsibility of one for the other is explored further in ethics section (4.2.2.3). Not all researchers and participants would respond to this approach. Mutuality is possible in these cases, to a degree because of the socio-culture of the settings, and generates an epistemic and ethical coherence. As interpreters evaluate experiences they are making more than cognitive or rational assessments, they are involved in ways of actually experiencing the world. Understanding is a mode of being (Schwandt 1999). Understanding could be conceived of as an *I-You* dialogue between the interpreting adults and the children.

The phenomenological and multi-modal processes of observation support circumspection based on the evidence from expressions and responses. This is both a different way of seeing and seeing a different thing. I conclude that both these changes may occur because one is seeing what is there, yet one would not see it necessarily with previous approaches to observation. The initial interpretation was inevitable (Kress 2012), however, awareness of being in an open phase of interpretation that will be followed by other interpretative cycles allows a greater degree of *openness* to this first cycle. All that the child may pay attention to remains indefinite, therefore our accomplishment as observers is to make an interpretation from what information is available to us in that moment, in that context, as we and the children are being and deciding-in-the-world. It is not an automatic narrative. The interpretation in the participatory cycles of analysis contributes vitality (Polkinghorne 1983) to the interpretation of lived experience, authenticity of knowledge fired by the interest to go beyond assumptions, and builds a sustained dialogue between the adults maintaining indefiniteness (Dahlberg and Dahlberg 2003). I prioritise understanding the decision-making processes rather than certain knowledge of what occurs. Practitioners and parents remain and respond within the situations they are in. The interpreters found they could retain their connection and role in relational flow with the children in the second-person approach in observation (Reddy 2008)

and without Merleau-Ponty (1962)'s automatic fracture from experience when reflecting. My extension of dialogue to the observer is a more specific finding than that of Pálmadóáttir and Einarsdóttir (2016). They begin to articulate a critical discussion of the role of researchers as observers of young children. I extend that consideration of researcher and child relations in video observations. I suggest how the children and adults may be moving out of different attitudes of relation. Observers, including practitioners in settings, may be made more relevant than third parties (Linell 2009) by the regard of the children, and I have demonstrated how this may be interpreted and understood.

Participants learned to approach interpreting situations in ways that can be drawn on in the future. Speaking for myself, mutuality means I have wider perception, but my voice as researcher does not have the final say even though these thoughts are set in ink. My awareness of interpreting many modes is enhanced with an emphasis on the expressive and responsive experience, of children, and through mutuality in the interpreting. Although there is no guarantee (Merleau-Ponty 2012), this awareness will optimise my understanding of the children's attention, relatedness, and dialogical agency.

The thesis disputes that the constituents could always be transferred (Giorgi and Giorgi 2003). The children's meaning making and the adult interpretation remain situated. There is evidence of considered decisions, made with consideration that can be understood if observers also cultivate attentiveness. Not reaching a definite conclusion about everything involved in a decision is not inconclusive. This study has arguably refined participants' perception, understood some of the processes of decision-making, recognised what is not known and the continuity of experiences, both the children's and the adults'.

10.3 The implications of the understanding generated for practice with children under the age of three in professional education and care settings

Since I focus on chid-initiated decisions, this research does not centre on practitioners shaping the decisions within interactions, but there are implications for their role. This section of the concluding chapter addresses how understanding of decisions made with dialogical agency can be enacted in practice. It considers the

implications for professional dialogue, situated understanding, responsiveness to children, and multi-modal interpretations of observations.

10.3.1 The enactment of understanding of decisions made with dialogical agency in professional dialogue

The enactment of understanding will be between practitioners, parents, children, the learning environment and the local setting culture. Once practitioners have had the opportunity to concentrate on phenomenological and multi-modal interpretations, then practice is the ideal place to develop this thinking, not in critique separate from the world (Olsson 2009:52). Understanding of decisions made with dialogical agency will thrive where there are communicative cultures in settings, especially when parents are actively involved (Whalley and Arnold in press). Parent and baby and toddler groups will support it, such as Growing Together (Tait and Lawrence 2014) where the adults discuss their own growing understanding of the children. Staff in continuing professional development who review relational and embodied pedagogic strategies such as 'Acknowledging' the children and 'Using the Body' (Lawrence and Gallagher 2015) will sustain and evolve in practice the type of understanding developed in this thesis. When this occurs there may be an accompanying welcome for indefiniteness that has further implications for assessment, enhanced mutuality and awareness and a shifting world-view about how the children may be perceiving their world as they make decisions. Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) recommend the perspective of a practitioner be adopted to 'live' the phenomenological attitude (250). While I disagree with their assumption that a practitioner is theoretically neutral, that they advocate a practitioner can bring a phenomenological attitude along with praxis into their day to day lived understanding of children is encouraging for the potential contribution of this study. Sharing the phenomenological questions in their professional dialogue, rather than answers, may contribute to practitioners engaging thoughtfully and tactfully. Arguably, even though it is very elusive, the focused quality of an *I-You* relation could always be a potential relation for children, and for adults with children. Understanding it may help enhance relations in the flow of practice. An overtone of *I-You* relations persisting throughout the span of *I-You* and *I-It* alternations would be of some benefit to professional agency and relational practice.

This study could contribute to practice in generating ideas about *how* the interpretation of observations could be carried out (Hammersley 2012:2) in dialogue particularly about decision-making in two year-olds. However, It is difficult to develop dialogical awareness without being part of a community in the setting to enhance dialogical practices with colleagues in observation and assessment, as in Reggio Emilia (Rubizzi 2001). This study shows that professional agency (Edwards 2007) can be deepened in dialogue. Where it does not exist in a setting, individual practitioners, for example child-minders, may need to start to construct it with colleagues and parents, reach out for dialogue in their local area, and through early years organisations.

10.3.2 Situated relational implications and responsiveness

The interpretations in this study have currency. They are situated in the same time-frame as the children's experiences, within the interaction for the observer who is present, and within a matter of a week or so for the research group. The same argument should pertain to observations in general, however currency is vital when considering children deciding-in-the-world (Rinaldi speaking in Fasano 2002; Moss 2013). That does not mean the adult always takes part directly in decisions but as part of a system of relationships. According to this stance, decisions cannot be seen as separate from relationships. One implication of viewing children's context in terms of a system of relationships would be the development of dialogical pedagogy (Malaguzzi 1993; Graham and Fitzgerald 2010; Dalli *et al.* 2011; Hoyuelos 2013; Matusov and Miyazaki 2014; Carter and Nutbrown 2016; White 2016). Such pedagogy would be a significant influence on decisions made with dialogical agency and vice versa.

Through the analyses the nature of the relationships is considered to be potentially dialogical and therefore the repertoire of choices the children make is not assuredly monologistic, reflecting only their own vested interests as in Wood (2014:15). They may be not only enacting forms of dialogical agency that are different from the expectations of adults, they may be competent in maintaining decisions in dialogical relationships *beyond* the expectations of the adults. A critical engagement with established discourses about free choices and free play requires us to resist making immediate definite assumptions about intentions and be more open to interpreting

the responses of the children in each interaction. Singer and de Haan (2007) find very young children resolve many conflicts and this study found protecting children's play too early may prevent them not only from resolving differences, but also from evolving extended dialogue (7.4). Here lies a responsibility for the practitioners to remain responsive (7.2.3) to the aliveness of the children's choices (Else 2014). In fact practitioners cannot utilise closed, precise final meanings generated from this study. They can only develop their own understandings in personal ways (van Manen 1990), situated in their own practice (Angrosino and Rosenberg 2011), in 'localness' (Ingold 2011a).

The most local response is that between the practitioners and the children in their daily encounters. If the children are making decisions with dialogical agency there is likely to be some spontaneity in the interactions. One direction for further research would be the development of understanding of surprise and responses that might occur in dialogical decision-making (Schon 1987; Yanow and Tsoukas 2009). The practitioner's response in the midst of action rests on an open reciprocal relationship. The role of adult intervention in the interactions of the children has to be judged situation by situation. Sarah's reflection led her to value a multi-modal acknowledgement of the uncertainty in the situation. She was working with enhanced multi-modal literacy (Nyland 2009), and a reconsideration of when the adult role needs to come to the fore (7.4). This analysis demonstrates that the adult involvement is not only in a proximal leading or modelling pedagogy (Hudson 2012; Clark and Dumas 2015). It also needs to be in a distal role (Rubizzi 2001; Stephen 2010) in the provision for child-chosen socially-co-constructed experiences. Adults could never attain a mastery where everything is understood in the flow of the moment when interpreting children in practice. Adults could respond more readily within uncertainty (Coles 2002) with understanding of how decisions may be made with dialogical agency and how the experience may be relevant to the children (Von Glaserfeld 1991). Harcourt and Keen (2012) proposed a shift towards the teacher identifying the experience of engagement in decisions. My study contributes to this understanding.

I have established that interpretation and understanding are already part of experience in the observation (4.2.2.2). In pedagogy, observation and interpretation

are part of encounters with the children as well as part of organised assessment and planning processes. Awareness of how decisions may be made with dialogical agency can reinforce practitioners' understanding and their responses in terms of the adult role in assessment and to create enabling environments (Early Education 2012). Dialogical awareness builds inclusive education because the educator may meet with the learner's lived experience 'from the other side' (Friedman 1955:177), and not lose sight of his or her own experience. Practitioners can interpret dialogical agency in the observations that they make. If children may respond to increasingly refined perceptions, then the learning processes could be optimised (Dreyfus 2002), if practitioners understood ways of interpreting children's decisions. This would be a less automatic denoting of children's experience than can happen at speed (see 7.3.1 and 8.2) and with few alternatives considered in some assessment checklists. Dialogue refined both the adult perception and the potential for attuned offers to children subsequently (Rubizzi 2001).

What is seen of children's decisions may be determined by what one is open to seeing. There are implications for practice in how one regards the other, according to the extent of dialogical agency we think a child has, or has the potential to have. The practitioner's role can be to acknowledge competence, agency and rights in decision-making including formative assessment situated within the learning process. Understanding could grow about how decisions may be initiated and how interactions may be sustained in mutuality and be extended in dialogue. At 29 and 30 months Oscar and Camille (5.1.1 and 5.1.2) were focusing, shifting attention, listening to and doing with each other, not exclusively either listening or doing. They maintain the two-channeled attention expected at the end of the English Early Years Foundation Stage in the Goal for Communication and Language: Listening and attention, 'Children listen attentively in a range of situations. […] They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately' (Early Education 2012:16). Broadening the understanding of attention is particularly relevant in multi-language settings (Stephen *et al.* 2016).

More than observable results for assessment, the findings contribute understanding of observable meaning-making processes. The manifest expressions and responses of the children present the means for assessment underpinned by the constructivist

principle of what makes sense to the learner (Von Glasersfeld 1991). It matters how we conceptualise and recognise learners' decision-making so that it becomes valued and accepted, and this is an important implication for practice of this study.

The findings of this study support practice with multi-modal literacy. However, I argue that the effectiveness extends beyond cognitive development (Goldin-Meadow 2000), to the perception of emotions and the embodied lived experience not separate from thoughts. For example in the percussion episodes (5.1.2), the children quickly made skillful responses to each other's movements and broadened their own repertoires. By engaging with the new, by improvising, the children are deciding to learn responding to solicitations of more and more refined perceptions of the current situation. Multi-modal literacy can also interpret attention and decisions when the children are in motion. Attention in movement opens up understanding of many more situations in addition to children's attentiveness when sitting still (Early Education 2012).

Multi-modal literacy is a form of dialogical awareness because it means one can see what is relevant and signified in the lived everyday experience. The starting point of such literacy, involving detailed multi-modal interaction analysis, would be too onerous within the usual observation, planning and assessment cycle in the English Early Years Foundation Stage. However, initial training and continuing professional development on phenomenological interpretation and multi-modal interaction analysis would lay foundations for professional vision and judgment (Goodwin 1994; Coles 2002). Educators may not make correct interpretations and decisions, but this process of not adhering immediately to the first interpretation may form part of the deliberation. Beyond reflection, the acquisition of professional judgement is founded on a form of knowledge that Coles calls practical wisdom. For Schon also, professional practice requires 'questioning the assumptional nature of knowing –in action' (1987:28). It would refine understanding of learning in practice, within the lived reality (Schwandt 1999:454). The intentional arc (Merleau-Ponty 1962) may form a useful guide for adults' expectations when learning to observe and respond to children's decisions. Initially the quantity of potentially relevant elements that can be perceived may be overwhelming. Then, through training or experience, practitioners learn to choose a perspective. This study can inform and contribute to such training to decide which elements are most relevant, and adult decision-making and

responding may become more straightforward. Dreyfus (2002) argues that expertise develops to a point of subtlety and refinement where the vast repertoire of situational discriminations can result in an immediate intuitive situational response. I would be cautious about assuming one ever arrives at instant certainty about what to do immediately in practice because all situations and children are unique.

10.3.4 Limitations of the analysis

The first cycles of analysis are dependent upon the participation of focus children, parents and practitioners. The analysis could extend further to all the other children in each interaction, to their parents and key people, not just some. The direct participation of Tia and Henry's fathers would have enriched the findings, rather than indirect contributions through Anne and Rachel. Parents and practitioners in this study interpreted successful engaged relations with others and they became appreciative rather than sceptical about the children's dialogical agency when making decisions. This could have been otherwise. How decisions are understood is limited by the view adopted of free will (section 2.4) and this might not be the same in other studies. The participants in this study were interested in and valued the quality of relations. The parents were not selected on this basis but other studies may pre-select participants according to views of relational quality, agency and free will as a starting point. In any other case study the participants and researcher would be different, with different relations between them and so other interpretations of decisions made with dialogical agency would doubtless occur.

My subjectivity could be viewed as a virtuous contribution. However, since I ultimately re-present the experience of both the children and the adult participants as the author, then I am the keystone of the research and my reflexivity about my own values does require scrutiny (Simons 2009). For example, previously I had been comfortable with Donaldon's (1992) view that human beings always have intentions as a positive value. I then read Bateson (2000) questioning our tendency to hold purpose and instrumentality in high regard and I now realise that this was a habit of mind of mine. I support Wood (2014) in promoting critical discourse about children's choices.

In the understanding of this study being human does not determine where mutuality may begin and end, and the dynamic nature of potential relations identified means that there is no determined frontier. I can only acknowledge this indistinct edge to my study. The undetermined aspects could be seen as weaknesses, or as representations of the complexity of experience. Attention itself is an uncertain interpretation, yet our focus on attention provides an interpretation that remains close to the child's manifest experience. These participants' interpretations of these particular children's decision-making can be understood by others even if they are not intended to be applied to other situations. Therefore understanding has been communicated.

The knowledge I aimed to access in this study is hard to access in other ways and there is no guarantee (Norris 2004,2011; Merleau-Ponty 2012) that the decision-making experience as it presents to the children is experienced by them in the same way that their expressions and responses present to observers. The interpretation is relevant in the adults' judgement and their declared feeling of understanding (Willis 2004). The lived experiences of the participants have informed the representation of the children's lived experiences. The interpretation of the children's experiences just as they presented themselves has not excluded the interpreter's experience and this is a challenging combination. However, the process has rendered the children's experiences with some justice (von Eckartsberg 1998), because they were recognised by the other interpreters. Multi-faceted perspectives are an indication of the extent of the interpretation, and not necessarily a limitation. A different interpretation in dialogue with the observation may be made on another occasion (Robinson 1991). The understanding can be valued in that time and that place. There is a local social construction of validity, not an external one (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Our understandings are lived experiences of the interpretative possibilities.

If interpreting the account of the children's experience does provide insight then there would have been some understanding of the particular experience (Schwandt 2000). Our phenomenological analysis and particular use of multi-modal interaction analysis reached some rendering of van Manen's 'existentials' (1990:101) in terms of the lived body, time, space and human relations in decision-making. Vividness (Polkinghorne 1983) is rendered throughout in the attempts to stay close to the

children's experiences and this is also a form of accuracy. Additionally, in terms of accuracy, analysis helps us develop individually and mutually as observers, and to perceive differently how the children respond to each other.

Personally, I wanted to move away from narrative accounts of the children's actions towards an account of the children's lived experiences of decision-making. This is difficult because the first narrative that occurs is inevitable (Kress 2012) and carries an incumbent weight (Cresswell and Miller 2000). I have realised there could be no transcendental knowing and understanding of an essential experience. Buber (1970), in excluding experience from being in an *I-You* relation, seemed to be eliminating part of what makes an encounter, as Husserl (1980) would have done through bracketing. By contrast I have come to understand observation and interpretation situated in and remaining in the particular. It is an evolving understanding recognising that meanings may change in future contexts. The involvement of the participants render this an on-going conversation rather than a solitary endeavour. Rather than being lonely with it (Buber 1970) or separated by a fracture from it (Merleau-Ponty 1962), understanding perception and understanding may be possible in and after decisions made with dialogical agency, through mutuality and further dialogue.

10.4 Summary of the implications for practice

I propose two contributions to knowledge. Firstly, children's decisions may be interpreted with parents and practitioners in mutuality. Secondly, I contribute understanding of the transition into relatedness. The accomplishments of the study are the interpretation of children deciding to be in relation, deciding for themselves while being in relation, the recognition of the potential for dialogue rather than the assumption of monologue, and the recognition of the potential for extended discourse in which decisions are made.

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Appendix IV - Thematic analysis of Oscar, Camille and the rings 5.1.1.

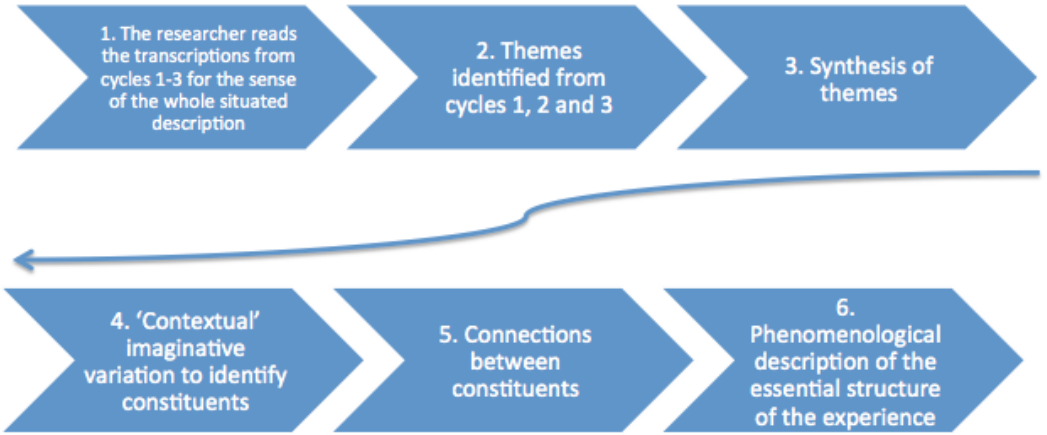

Figure 4.9. Flowchart demonstrating the steps of the interpretative phenomenological method (after Giorgi and Giorgi 2003, p254) used in the fourth thematic analytic cycle

Step 2 –Identifying themes from the participatory cycles 1-3

The themes are in italics when they are in the participants' words in order to stay close to the participants' interpretations. There were interpretations that are directly observable, and there are some underpinning qualities of the interaction that were latent and included contributions from the broader knowledge of the participants. The tables (see Tables IV.i, IVii, and IViii) make this distinction clear and identify a shorthand 'super' theme for each cycle.

Interpretations MANIFEST in observation from reading aspects of the phenomenal mind	**Interpretations LATENT in observation**	**Super-ordinate Theme 1st Cycle**
• *really playfully (T1L1)* • Oscar interacts as a *comedian (T1L5)* • being *expressive (T1L3)* • *she's quite expressive (T1L7)* • *face lit up (T3L12)* • *expression was open and amused (T3L11)* • *a* [dancing] *kind of creativity (T2L2)*	• *be doing things for Camille's amusement (T1L40)* • *It's not meant meanly (T3L10)* • *playing so lovely together (T3L2)* • *quite a lot of humour in it (T1L38)* • *Trying to make her laugh* (T1L5)	*Humour*
• *they both jump about (T1L10)* • *together (T1L9 & 12) (T3L2)*	• *sharing the rings (T1L26)* • *with Camille (T1L27 & 39)* • *explore them with her (T1L36) sociable (T1L38)* • *doing things for Camille's amusement (T1L40)* • *playing so lovely together (T3L2)* • 'they just knew' *(T1L10)* • *being in relation (T1L37)* • *interaction with [...] more important than activity (T1L40)* • *want us both (T1L29)* • *mutually their game. (T3L16)*	*Mutually*
• *face lit up (T3L12)*	• *what's going to happen next?" (T3L13 &14)* • *game is going to continue (T3L13)*	*What's going to happen next?"*
• *the way she tries to move* the rings *(T2L1)* • a [dancing moves] kind of *creativity (T2L2)*		*the way she move[s]*

Table IV.i). Themes that emerged from analysis 1st open cycle. T = Transcript L = Line number.

Interpretations MANIFEST in observation from reading aspects of the phenomenal mind	Interpretations LATENT in observation	Super-ordinate Themes 1st Cycle
• *[arms moving up through ring gesture]* (T1L23) • *explore them with her'*(T1L36)	• *going through a boundary'* [schema] (T1L20)	*Explore them*
• *'way* (T4L4)	• *going through a boundary'* [schema] (T1L20)	*'way*
	• *Trying to get her attention*(T1L2 & 28 • *Trying to make her laugh* (T1L5)	*Trying* *Attention*

Table IV.i) continued. Themes that emerged from analysis 1st open cycle. T = Transcript L = Line number.

Interpretations MANIFEST in observation from reading aspects of the phenomenal mind	**Interpretations LATENT in observation**	**Super-ordinate Theme 2nd Cycle**
• *wanted to engage Camille (T5 40,41,42)* *for her to engage with him with the larger rings.*	*'Look Camille, come and engage with this with me'. (T5L40*	*Engage*
• *So she picks it up first.* *That's when he takes it away.*		
• *his body language a full-stop. (T5L39)* • *Physically move the pole away. (T5L36)* • *putting his whole body through the rings (T5L43)*	• *He's saying 'All done' and now he's saying, 'That one'(T5L30).* • *All done (T5L37)*	*Body* *through*
• *happy to go back (T5L24)* • *Mirroring there of the arm. That's actually like a mirror image isn't it? (T5L10)* • *Oscar's reaching out and she's reaching out. Both of them have got their hands up. (T5L13)* • *He looks through the ring. She looks through the ring.(t5L9)*	*There are quite a few things they do because the other one does. T5L9 & 18)* *'Look Camille, come and engage with this with me'. (T5L40)*	*With* *Both*
• *Physically move the pole away. (T5L36)* • *putting his whole body through the rings (T5L43)*	• *to draw her attention from the seriated rings to the larger ones (T5L35)*	*Attention* to *rings*

Table IV.ii). Themes that emerged from analysis 2nd detailed cycle. T = Transcript L = Line number.

Interpretations MANIFEST in observation from reading aspects of the phenomenal mind	**Interpretations LATENT in observation**	**Super-ordinate Theme 2nd Cycle**
• *putting his whole body through the rings (T5L43)* • *He looks through the ring. She looks through the ring(T5L9)*		*Through*
• *But when he puts a ring over his head, she's got her back to him. (T5L21)* • *Physically move the pole away. (T5L36)*	• *for her to engage with him (T5L40, 41 & 42)* • *tries to get her attention (T5L48)* • *to draw her attention from the seriated rings to the larger ones (T5L35)*	*Attention* *Engage*
• *He holds his hand like with <u>energy</u> I think you know like ... poised. (T5L16)*		*Poised energy*
• *It was <u>me</u>. I did it (T6L4)*	• *away because I wanted to play with it* • *he was wanting (T5L45)* • *for her to engage with him (T5L40, 41 & 42)* • *tries to get her attention (T5L48)*	*Wanted* and *tries*
• *happy to go back for her to engage with him (T5L24)*		*happy to go back*

Table IV.ii) continued. Themes that emerged from analysis 2nd detailed cycle. T = Transcript L = Line number.

Interpretations MANIFEST in observation from reading aspects of the phenomenal mind	**Interpretations LATENT in observation**	**Super-ordinate Themes 3rd Cycle**
• *comedy (T7L9)*		*Comedy*
• *really enjoying sharing his experience with Camille and taking it in turns with the rings (T7L2)*		*Enjoying sharing*
• *with Camille (T7L2)*	• *wanting Camille to be part of that with him. (T7L22)*	*With Camille*
• *away because I wanted to play with it (T8L2)*	• *just trying to encourage Camille to swap activities. (T7L5)* • *changing the direction of the play (T7L21)* • *she changed her mind. (T8L6)*	*Changing the direction*
• *many more ways* of *communicating (T7L6)*		*Many ways Communicating*
• *with the rings (T7L3) (T7L18) (T7L48) & (T8L7)*		*With rings*
	• Not *unkind (T7L20)* • *Sensitivity (T7L9)*	*Sensitivity*
	• *could still play [with small rings and holder] if she wanted. (T8L5)* • *she changed her mind. (T8L6)* • *decide to play too'.. (T8L8* • *the children decide for themselves where is this game going to go next (T7L27)*	*Decide for themselves*
• *[perplexed face]* (T8L1) • *She looked really unsure what he was intending to do, and then she smiled.(T7L29)*		*Unsure […]then she smiled*

Table IV.iii). Themes that emerged from analysis 3rd open cycle. T = Transcript L = Line number.

Step 3 Synthesis of the themes from the participatory cycles

The themes from the first three participatory cycles can be compared (see Table IV iv). The overarching tone of the interaction was revealed in the first open holistic cycle, it was then confirmed in the third cycle when the interaction was also reconsidered in an uninterrupted 'flow'. The second cycle yielded predominantly manifest aspects of the interaction interpreted through the multi-modal interaction analysis, although these were observed in the open cycles, the intensity and complexity of their reading and responses to each other was more evident in the second cycle's detailed interpretation. The themes align and overlap with each other in places, for example *changing direction* and *changing her mind*. Where this occurs the next step in the thematic analysis is to synthesise themes.

1st cycle 'super' themes	**2nd cycle 'super' themes**	**3rd cycle 'super' themes**
Humour		*Comedy + enjoying sharing*
Being together mutually	*Engage*	*With Camille* *enjoying sharing*
What's going to happen next?"		*Changing the direction*
the way she move[s]	*Body* *Through*	*Many ways* *Communicating*
	With *Both*	

Table IV iv). Comparative table of themes that emerged from the different cycles.

1st cycle 'super' themes	2nd cycle 'super' themes	3rd cycle 'super' themes
explore them	*Attention to rings*	*With rings*
'way		
Trying *Attention*	*Attention*	*Sensitivity*
It was <u>me</u>. I did it	*Poised energy*	*Decide for themselves*
	Wanted and tries	
• *she changed her mind.*	*happy to go back*	*Unsure […]then she smiled* *[perplexed face].*

Table IV iv). continued. Comparative table of themes that emerged from the different cycles.

1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle 'super-ordinate' themes synthesized	Number
Humour: Humour Happy to go back Enjoying Comedy	*1*
Mutuality: Being together Mutually Engage With Both Mirroring Sharing With Camille Sensitivity	*2*
Changing the direction: what's going to happen next?" Changing the direction	*3*
Body moves: the way she move[s] Body Through Poised energy Many ways Communicating	*4*
Attention to rings :'way explore them attention Attention to ringsWith rings	*5*
Space: Through	*6*
Sensitivity: Attention attentionSensitivity	*7*
Agency: Trying It was me. I did it Poised energy Decide for themselves Wanted and tries	*8*
she changed her mind: she changed her mind. happy to go back [perplexed face]/ Unsure […]then she smiled	*9*

Table IV v). First step of synthesis – finding connections across emergent themes. This is a progressive refinement.

1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle 'super-ordinate' themes further synthesized	**Number**
Humour: *Humour /Happy to go back/ Enjoying /Comedy*	*1*
Mutuality: *Being together/ Both /Mutually /Attention /Attention /Engage /With /Both /Mirroring /Sharing/ With Camille /Sensitivity / the way she move[s] /Body /Many ways*	*2*
Change (potential): *Creativity/ Trying/ What's going to happen next?/ She changed her mind ?"/ Wanted* and *tries / Happy to go back/ It was me. I did it/ Poised energy/ Changing the direction/ [perplexed face]/ Unsure […] then she smiled/Decide for themselves*	*3*
Attention to rings: *'way/ Explore them /Attention/ Attention to rings/With rings*	*4*
Space: *Through/ Explore them /Attention/ Attention to rings/With rings*	*5*

Table IV vi). Final synthesis – finding connections across emergent themes

Step 4 of the fourth cycle phenomenological method uses 'Contextual' imaginative variation to identify constituents in the Oscar, Camille and the rings episode. The essential constituents are those without which the interaction would collapse. The incidental ones could be modified but the experience would essentially remain recognisable (see Table IV vii).

Essential constituents of decisions made with dialogical agency in this episode.		**Incidental constituents**
Mutuality: *Engage*ment with embodied *being with* the other. Both demonstrate awareness of where the other's a*ttention* is.		***Humour:*** There could be alternative tones. The tone could vary. The tone could also be overarching or could indicate only shorter instances of *I-You* relations.
Change (potential): indicated by, and the sense of surprise '*what's going to happen next?'*, or '*changing the direction*', '*she changed her mind'.* It did not have to mean change but the possibility of it in enacted in improvisation and spontaneity. ***Trying*** and ***attention –*** is also part of *being together*, and also indicate agency in the form of the options that the person is aware of having '*if* s/he *wanted'*. '*Poised'*		***Attention to rings:*** the children could be in relation with other objects.
		Attention to space: where space *through* the middle of the rings is made relevant by the participants

Table IV vii). Step 4 of the fourth cycle phenomenological method used in the thematic analysis
'Contextual' imaginative variation to identify constituents in the Oscar, Camille and the rings episode.

Step 4b – Constituents organised without distinction between essential and incidental.

	Constituents of decisions made with dialogical agency in Oscar, Camille and rings episode (5.1.1).
	Mutuality: *Engage*ment with embodied *being with* the other. Both demonstrate awareness of where the other's a*ttention* is. ***Trying*** and ***attention –*** is also part of *being together*, and also indicate agency in the form of the options that the person is aware of having '*if* s/he *wanted'*. '*Poised'*
	Change (potential): indicated by, and the sense of surprise '*what's going to happen next?'*, or '*changing the direction*', '*she changed her mind'.* It did not have to mean change but the possibility of it enacted in improvisation and spontaneity.
	Humour: overarching tone.
	Attention to rings
	Space: where space *through* the middle of the rings is made relevant by the participants

Table IV viii). Step 4b of the fourth cycle phenomenological method used in the thematic analysis Constituents in the Oscar, Camille and the rings episode

Step 5 of phenomenological method makes connections between the constituents..

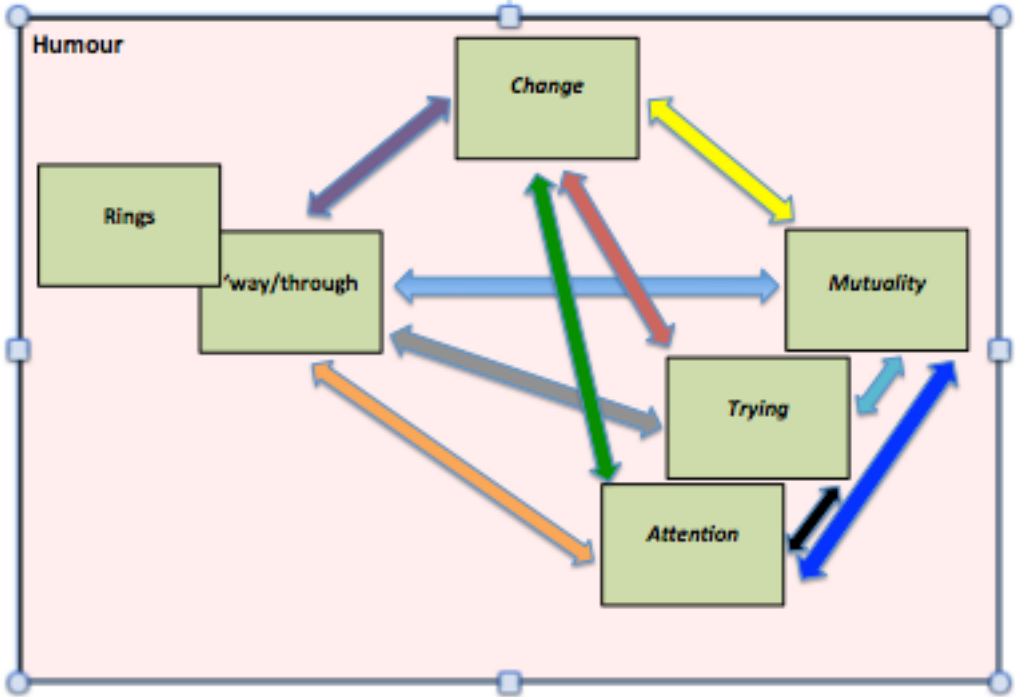

Figure IV.i). *Step 5* of phenomenological method: Connections between constituents.

The links between constituents give a sense of the structure of the experience that according to Giorgi and Giorgi (2003), supercedes categorical thinking.
The embodied *mutual* experience links to the relation to space and *rings* known through our bodies (light blue arrow).
Similarly, one pays *attention* through the *mutual* embodied experience (royal blue arrow).
Attention shifts in order to *change* and innovative or with the potential to *change* (green arrow).
One pays *attention* in our situated experience to the way one can occupy space '*way/through* (orange arrow).
Mutuality links to change through the response of one other to the potential new occurrence whether they realise it or not, and how they maintain the interaction (yellow arrow).
Adjustments and movements in positioning with space and/or rings can create the *changes* (purple arrow).
Trying is with regard to the other person in mutuality (turquoise arrow).
Trying relies on having paid *attention* to the options*. Trying* may maintain *attention* (black arrow).
Trying may relate to the space where something is or happens '*way/through*, or to the rings (grey arrow).
Trying may bring about *change* or the potential for *change*, or help adjust through the transitions of change (red arrow).
Attention may perceive the affordances for *change* and change may be realised through continued *attention* (green arrow).

Since *trying* and *attention* are part of the process for *mutuality* these are not completely separate constituents (see Table IV viii). Step 4b)
Humour is the way in which all of the other constituents may be enacted and so is a transversal to all (whole area shaded red).

Appendix V Thematic analyses of Tia's episodes

Thematic analysis of Tia and the shoes episode (5.2.1)

Interpretations MANIFEST in observation from reading aspects of the phenomenal mind	**Interpretations LATENT in observation**	**Super-ordinate Themes**
• *trying to show the others how the heels were sounding* • [jumping] • [clip clop clip clop] • *on the different surfaces different sounds.* • *Trying on the grass as well*	*'cos she loves those shoes so much (laughs).* *Loving the sound of it.* - They have so much choice the space affords it.	Attention to: *shoes'* movements *sounds* *spaces* and *surfaces*
• *on the different surfaces different sounds.* • *Trying on the grass as well*		*Changing* Trying different
• *how close she gets to children* • *watching if other children are watching her.*	• *-trying to attract attention needed to be with them.* • *Have them acknowledge her with her shoes.* • *She is open but to me it seems she's still a bit shy with the other children.*	*Acknowledge*ment? *attention* *Open*ness *Trying*
	• *she's still a bit shy with the other children.*	*Shy* tone
-She's showing herself and you	*-being with them.* *-I will relate to her* - [you] *sympathise or understand.* *-She's kind of acknowledging so I've acknowledged her*	*Mutuality* (Observer)

Constituents of decisions made with dialogical agency **'super-ordinate' themes further synthesised** *Tia and the shoes episode (5.2.1)*
*Open*ness
Mutuality Attention to: *shoes/* movements*/ sounds/ spaces /*and *surfaces*
Changing/ Trying different
Trying
Shy tone

*Thematic analysis Tia, Henry, Gemma, and Lila in the café episode (*32 months) *(5.2.4)*

Interpretations MANIFEST in observation	**Interpretations LATENT in observation**	**Super-ordinate Theme**
• *It's a lot of interaction through action. Giving back and forth.* • *giving a lot of things to others* [food in basket for Henry + gold box to Gemma].	• *Thinking of others*. • *Even gives things she's like to have herself* • *it's not that she doesn't want it herself.* • she wants somebody to have something • *That's her problem solving.* • *seems to be doing her own plan, but she needs the others.* • *Overall wanted to keep it going I think*	*Open*ness *Mutuality*
Lila comes closer to Tia	• *it's all quite friendly* • *Reading Lila and communicating with Lila* *using gestures worked*	*Friendly* tone
• requesting hand gesture for the cup • *she had to squeeze round to get out* • *the other children take everything and she goes and offers [something back] something to the child who didn't get anything.*	• *She is very persistent in what she wants* • *she can be quite perservering* • *She tries to give it to her* • *She went to some effort* • *She really wants the other person to have it.* • *It's like it's her café.* • *She's in charge* • *She is not afraid to have conflicts.* • *Overall wanted to keep it going I think*	*effort*
She keeps those shoes close.	*Never far. Really making sure that nobody else gets them.*	Attention to *shoes*

	Interpretations MANIFEST in observation	Interpretations LATENT in observation	Super-ordinate Theme
	• *She has all the cake and ice-cream.* • Giving food in basket to Henry • Giving box for Gemma		Attention to shopping
	• Filling and emptying the cup • requesting hand gesture for the cup • *she was talking with hands*	• *Reading Lila and communicating with Lila* *using gestures worked*	Attention to tipping and pouring

Constituents of decisions made with dialogical agency **'super-ordinate' themes further synthesised** *Tia, Henry, Gemma, and Lila in the café 5.2.4*
*Open*ness
Mutuality
Effort
Attention to *shoes/ shopping/ tipping and pouring*
Friendly tone

Appendix VI - Thematic analyses Henry with Freddy and sand episode (5.3.1)

Interpretations MANIFEST in observation	**Interpretations LATENT in observation**	**Super-ordinate Themes**
Henry buried in sand	*His Daddy buried him in Falmouth so! So that's obviously why*	*Daddy* *Sand* on beach *Sand* in nursery
Heaping sand around perimeter Scattering sand in air		Space Heap-ability of *sand* Scatter-ability of *sand*
'*Together forever'* song		Sounds - 'we' culture song Movements *Mutuality*

Constituents of decisions made with dialogical agency **'super-ordinate' themes further synthesised** *Henry with Freddy and sand episode (5.3.1)*
Openness
Mutuality,
Changing
Attention to: heap-ability and scatter-ability of *sand* the non- present environment of the beach *Daddy* *attention* to space and movements
sounds - '*we*' culture song

Appendix VII Discussion of Oscar, Camille and Rings Episode 5.1.1
NB highlighted sections are in the thematic analysis 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle (see Appendix IV)

Transcript 1. Analysis 1st Open Cycle: Darren, Hannah, Oscar, Penny and Sarah

Line	Speech
1	Sarah: *He's playing with them really playfully, isn't he? He's really*
2	*trying to get her attention.*
3	Hannah: *Look at his face. I think he's so expressive with his face,*
4	*especially when he wants somebody else to interact with him. He*
5	*seems to be quite the comedian doesn't he? Trying to make her laugh.*
6	Hannah: *I wonder whether she's copying his facial expressions or*
7	*whether she's quite expressive anyway.*
8	Sarah: *I wonder what she's feeling?*
9	Hannah: *They worked quite well together without really needing to*
10	*talk to each other about what they're doing. They just knew, "I'm*
11	*going to do this, you're going to help me do this and we're going to do*
12	*this together".*
13	Darren: *and they both jump about every time they put the ring on.*
14	Penny: *Does he have a hula hoop at home?*
15	Darren: *We used to.*
16	Hannah: *No, but we've got one of those pop-up tunnels that he loves*
17	*putting over his head.*
18	Darren: *When we've been to 'Growing Together"*[i] *there's a tambourine*
19	*down there and he likes putting that over his head.*
20	Sarah: *He's going through a boundary. There is a book box* [shelf]
21	*where he can put his feet through.*
22	Penny: *What did you want to do?*
23	Oscar: [makes arms moving up through ring gesture]
24	Penny: *Did you want to put it on your arm?*
25	Oscar: *Mmm* [nods].
26	Darren: *This interests me because he was sharing the rings with*
27	*Camille for so long, and then he's taken the ring holder away to get*
28	*Camille's attention.*
29	*Hannah: He did the "Well I'm taking this away now 'cos I want us to*
30	*both to do the* [large] *ring".*
31	Sarah: *I found that bit quite interesting where he did take it away.*
32	*What was his intention with that? I think he thought "Right I have to*
33	*get this out of the way so you can focus on these* [large rings]*now".*
34	Penny: *So there was something maybe about changing the focus.*
35	Sarah: *and I don't think it was enough for him that he just explored*
36	*those on his own. I think he really wanted to explore them with her.*
37	Penny: *Being in Relation – doing that kind of thing but with somebody.*
38	Hannah: *He's in a very sociable mood. There just seemed to be quite a*
39	*lot of humour in it. He seems to be doing things for Camille's*
40	*amusement as well as his own. I wonder whether the interaction with*
41	*Camille is more important than the actual activity?*

Transcript 2. 1st Open Cycle: Susana and Camille

Line	Speech
1 2	*Susana: The way she tries to move the rings. It's like the* [dancing moves] *kind of creativity' at home. Camille's very creative.*

Transcript 3. Analysis 1st Open Cycle: Staff meeting in Oscar's setting

Line	Speech
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17	J: *He didn't grab it, he didn't say "I'm taking it. That's mine", because they were playing so lovely together. When he did come back Camille's face did light up, didn't it? It was like, "Oh you are coming back to play with me". I don't think I would have stepped in, unless they were both upset.* S: *I think I've learned a lot from that because I think I would've done, I would have tried to name that for Camille.* E: *and I think the body language of the children as well. You pick up on that don't you?* P: *If she was reading him she would have read, "It's not meant meanly". His expression was open and amused.* E: *It was, it was. As J said when Oscar came back Camille's face lit up. Almost like "Ooh the game is going to continue, what's going to happen next?".* J: *She wasn't upset or anything when he took that away. It wasn't just Oscar's or it wasn't just Camille's. This was both, mutually their game.*

Transcript 4. Analysis 1st Open Cycle: Oscar at home with Hannah

Line	Speech
1 2 3 4 5 6	Hannah: *Where are you going with that?* Oscar: *What?* Hannah: *Where are you taking it?* Oscar: *'way* Hannah: *Out of the way?* Oscar: *Yeah*

Transcript 5. Analysis 2nd Detailed Cycle: Darren, Hannah, Penny and Sarah

Line	Speech
1	Penny: *How much is there an expectation that "I'll do it and then you'll do*
2	*it". Like in a conversation, I'll speak and then you'll speak. There is a lot*
3	*of interaction in many many ways combined.*
4	Darren: *and they both jump about.*
5	Penny: *There is a lot of interaction in many many ways combined. I*
6	*thought when I started that she'd started the reactions, that 'dance', but*
7	*actually it was Oscar. There does seem to be a well-matched watching of*
8	*each other. There are quite a few things they do because the other one*
9	*does. He looks through the ring. She looks through the ring.*
10	Sarah: *Mirroring there of the arm. That's actually like a mirror image isn't*
11	*it?*
12	Penny: *I hadn't seen that.*
13	Sarah: *Oscar's reaching out and she's reaching out. Both of them have got*
14	*their hands up. He does that a lot doesn't he? He holds his hand like with*
15	*energy I think you know like ...*
16	Penny: *poised.*
17	Sarah: *Yes*
18	Penny: *There are quite a few things they do because the other one does.*
19	*He looks through the ring. She looks through the ring. But when he puts a*
21	*ring over his head, she's got her back to him.*
22	Penny: *He's prepared to come back to her. She's stayed with that*
23	Hannah: *I didn't remember him going back to that. In fact when Camille*
24	*didn't follow him Oscar seemed happy to go back to the tower of rings*
25	*before taking the pole away to possibly encourage Camille to change*
26	*activity.*
27	Penny: Oh yes!
28	Hannah: *So she picks it up first.*
29	Darren: *That's when he takes it away.*
30	Hannah: *He's saying 'All done' and now he's saying, 'That one'. So I*
31	*wonder if he's saying, 'No we're all done with that, that one's next, we're*
32	*playing with this one'.*
33	Penny: *and he does this kind of* [gesture] *one of these* [iconic sweeping
34	arm behind him] *gestures.*
35	Sarah: *For him the only way to draw her attention from the seriated rings*
36	*to the larger ones was to physically move the pole away. […] He places it*
37	*at the bottom of the corridor and he says, 'All done'. By his body language*
38	*there, that frame particularly, he's saying 'All done'* [1] *and we're going to*
39	*leave that there now, a full-stop. Then he goes straight over to the larger*
40	*rings so I think this is him saying 'Look Camille, come and engage with this*
41	*with me'. He keeps looking to Camille as if for her to engage with him*
42	*with the larger rings. I think Oscar wanted to engage Camille in a game*
43	*putting his whole body through the rings.*
44	Hannah: *Even when he took that away she's still didn't go to the hoops*

45 46 47 48 49	*like he was wanting.* Penny: *Where was her attention? You wouldn't necessarily know that on your first viewing that she had her back to him*. Hannah: *And then Oscar tries to get her attention again to possibly say "look at these, these are fun, join me"?* .

Transcript 6. Analysis 2nd Detailed Cycle: Susana and Camille

Line	**Speech**
1 2 3 4	Penny: *Look who lifted the pole up first?* Camille: *Me!* Penny: *Who decided?* Camille: *It was me. I did it.*

Transcript 7. Analysis 3rd Open Cycle: Darren, Hannah, Penny and Sarah

Line	Speech
1	Darren: *I think the rings clip fits with my interest in Oscar's sharing quite*
2	*well. He seems to be really enjoying sharing his experience with Camille*
3	*and taking it in turns with the rings. I had wondered if he was struggling*
4	*with sharing when he took the pole away. He is just trying to encourage*
5	*Camille to swap activities.*.
6	Hannah: *This clip makes it clear that Oscar is using so many more ways*
7	*of communicating as well as verbal communication. I've learned more*
8	*about the gestures he uses and can interpret them easier to understand*
9	*his needs. I've been able to see how he uses comedy and sensitivity when*
10	*communicating with other children and I feel more secure knowing that*
11	*he is enjoying his time at nursery with his peers when I'm not there.*
12	Penny: *What would you have done if you had been there* [instead of me]
13	*with Oscar?*
14	Sarah: *I think initially I might have actually stepped in to defend her play*
15	*a little bit. I'm still building a relationship with Camille so I don't know*
16	*how much she might have asserted herself and said, "No, I'm not*
17	*finished, Oscar". So I might have said, "Oh Oscar, I think Camille's still*
18	*busy with the rings". But after watching the video together and having*
19	*the time to reflect on it and really analysing the facial expressions and*
20	*body language I don't think Oscar was taking it away to be unkind. I*
21	*think it was about changing the direction of the play and wanting*
22	*Camille to be part of that with him.*
23	Penny: *So after that process where does that leave you? What would*
24	*you do as a practitioner?*
25	Sarah: *I think we quite often talk about "Watching and Wondering". I*
26	*think that's what I would have done, stepped back let the children*
27	*decide for themselves where is this game going to go next rather than*
28	*jumping in. I was not too sure how she felt. She looked really unsure*
29	*what he was intending to do, and then she smiled. I think if Camille had*
30	*looked at me I might have offered some reassuring body language or*
31	*facial expressions, and maybe some words, "Where's Oscar taking it?".*
32	Hannah: He picked which size he wanted on his head as well because
33	he pulled them all out and laid them flat. He could have put that first
34	one on his head which was the biggest.
35	Penny: *So there are lots of little decisions aren't there.*
36	*Which gives you a sense of purposefulness overall. Not quite so random*
37	*is it?*
38	Hannah: *No*
39	Hannah: *It's definitely the process rather than the filling it because once*
40	*they've done it* [put all the rings on] *they take them all straight back off*
41	*again and do it again.*
42	Penny and Darren: *Yeh.*
43	Penny: *There does seem to be this going on* [referred to I-You literature

44	in the research notes].
45	Hannah: *Yes, definitely.*
46	Penny: *"I'm relating to you, relating to this thing that we're doing". Even*
47	*when he takes the stand away, it's not that he stops relating to her, he's*
48	*just changed what with. Playing games with the rings is continuing, but*
49	*within here there's been a little change of types of ring.*

Transcript 8. Analysis 3rd Open Cycle: Susana and Camille

Line	Speech
1	Susana: *at first her expression is* [perplexed face].
2	Camille: *He took it away because I wanted to play with it*
3	Penny: *… and then?*
4	Camille: *so I not play with it*
5	Susana: *She could still play* [with small rings and holder] *if she wanted.*
6	*She would go there, pick it up and bring it back, but she changed her*
7	*mind. I think so because she saw Oscar playing with the rings and she*
8	*thought 'Oh I'm going to decide to play too'.*
9	Penny: *So she was fully aware that, she knew what she could do.*
10	Susana: *Yes, yes. I think so. Yes, because if she wants something, she*
11	*tries to get it.*
12	*When she's at Pen Green she got very comfortable.*

Transcript 9. Reflections on research questions from Hannah, Darren and Sarah

Line	Speech
1	Hannah: *This links particularly with my research question about seeing*
2	*the ways in which Oscar communicates with other children.*
3	*Vocalisation including speech is of course important, and we can see*
4	*here so are the other modes, of manipulating objects and gaze. We've*
5	*seen Oscar and his peers using these modes repeatedly. I think you*
6	*definitely see more of him and you think, "Oh yes, he did do that", and*
7	*then you slow it down and go, "Wow, look he did that as well!". I think*
8	*it's just seeing that detail of what maybe going on in his head.*
9	Darren: *It's* [ELAN] *helped a lot because to watch it on the video it*
10	*seems to me a lot quicker. When you're looking at the pictures you can*
11	*see a lot more what's going on.*
12	Sarah: *Seeing the images frame-by-frame gave me the opportunity to*
13	*closely observe subtle changes in Oscar's gaze, body language and*
14	*proximity. There were moments when I noticed mirroring of gestures*
15	*for the first time once looking at the transcripts. Detailed analysis*
16	*revealed subtleties in Oscar's interaction that we had not discussed in*
17	*the open flow analysis. The co-ordination of the movements between*
18	*them seemed very clear.*
19	Sarah: *Every step along the way you always said this is about all of us.*
20	Hannah: *You've sent information beforehand making sure that*
21	*everybody a chance to look through it, to have input, to take it away*
22	*again and think about it. Like you really have valued it rather than it*
23	*just being done because you feel you have to.*
24	Darren: *I feel like we have got closer to Penny and Sarah as we worked*
25	*together on the project. I felt like I could be open and honest without*
26	*feeling silly.*
27	Sarah: *We've felt like you wanted it* [the input].
28	Penny: *I wanted to acknowledge that you know Oscar much better that*

I do, and so I always felt like I was throwing some ideas out and seeing what resonated with you.
Sarah: *None of it was edited so we could say 'I didn't mean to word it like that, thinking about it that's not what I meant' and we could always go back and change it.*
You [Penny] *facilitated it and made it happen in terms of us meeting and having the video prepared. In terms of the discussions I don't think you even spoke at the beginning of it. You'd play the video and wait for us …*
Hannah: *Wait for us to see what we'd pick up from it.*
Darren: *I felt it was good that Penny let us watch the footage and pick out bits to focus on first before sharing what she noticed or thought.*
Sarah: *Research really did strengthen our relationship, it did. The conversations were very different.*
Hannah: *There were small parts in a long conversation. So instead of 'look at Oscar, he was doing this', we were actually breaking it down side by side. You're having those deeper conversations. Having the time to go deeper, it opens up conversation that we wouldn't have had if the research project wasn't going on.*
Being able to watch Oscar's clips makes me think more about the ways Oscar communicates non-verbally than I would ever normally notice. I think that any extra understanding you can find of your child is always going to be valuable, as it's always something you'll be able to use in day to day life, the more aware you are.
I *think it is valuable for us to be able to see how Oscar speaks with his body language when he is not talking so we can understand him.*
Hannah: *It builds on your knowledge. I didn't know a lot of the words, I didn't understand until we were doing it so I learned the phrases and what they mean.*
Sarah: *Having the language to have the discussion about it.*
Before we may have touched on things like relationships he was developing with other children.
Hannah: *or interests*
Sarah: *… yeah, but not necessarily the cues for how he interacts with others,*
I don't think we'd have spoken about that.
Hannah: *and the interpersonal skills that he's using.*
Sarah: *I think it helped me to become a lot more in tune with Oscar. I could watch it really closely with you* [Hannah*] and see how you were with him at home and how adults and children were with him in the setting. […] When we were doing the open views, when we were watching the video for the first time, you* [Hannah] *would maybe say, 'Oh I think he was trying to do that' and I'd say, "Do you know I really think he was trying to do that'. Although, quite often it was the same thing that we thought.*
Hannah: *The video with the water* [Oscar is controlling the flow through hot and cold taps] *and he was saying about fire, we were all trying to*

76 77 78 79 80 81	*interpret it differently as to what he was saying and what he was meaning in the water. You wouldn't have thought about it quite so much without having everybody else's interpretation. It's not I'm right and you're wrong, it's 'Oh well he could be doing this and he could be doing that'. […] Having someone else's perspective – seeing that three to four people can have completely different interpretations.*

Appendix X Glossary
'Observing and Understanding Decision-Making in Two-Year-Olds in Dialogue'

Affordance – Affordance is defined as '"action possibilities" latent in the environment, objectively measurable and independent of the individual's ability to recognize them, but always in relation to agents and therefore dependent on their capabilities' (Gibson 1979:x).

Agency - In current usage (Sairanen and Kumpulainen 2014) agency indicates acting deliberately making free choices.

Attention – can to some extent be used interchangeably with awareness. Awareness is knowing an internal or environmental event. Attention is a process of response to that awareness making preferential responses to some events or stimuli (Chaplin 1985, cited in Norris 2004:5). Awareness/attention comes in degrees, and a person may be phenomenally aware of something without paying much attention to it (Norris 2004:9)

Constituent – an element that is integral to the quality of the particular experience Giorgi and Giorgi (2003)

Decision - an action-orientated choice, 'selecting one of a number of available courses of action' (Iannone 2001)(online). The significant condition is the child could have done otherwise. Awareness of alternatives and the selection are part of the decision as well as the final action.

Density of modes or modal density – 'the modal intensity and/or modal complexity through which a higher-level action is constructed' (Norris 2004:79).

Dialogue - not *dia* -defined or limited as two, but as 'through' or 'by' logos, that is in knowledge and discourse (Linell 2009:4) with the other.

Dialogical agency - an existential *being* in relation with the other when choosing, not only thinking and taking action.

Differential attention - Kendon (1990) theorises differential attention. People regard certain aspects of other's actions as intentional and messages as intended. In this way they 'explore one another's interpretative perspectives. They thereby negotiate some measure of agreement before either of them needs to address to the other any explicit action (242).

Embodiment – as conceptualised in phenomenology especially in the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962) the body is inseparable from sensory experience and perception.

Ensemble of modes – 'representations or communications that consist of more than one mode, brought together not randomly but with a view to collective and interrelated meaning' (MODE 2012:online).

Extended dialogue in the world – constituent of decisions made with dialogical agency defined as the extension to include additional others as well as the other child such as the observer or any of the following:

Space – a decision made in dialogue with space or the environment itself.
Movement –a decision made in dialogue with movement itself.
Sound –a decision made in dialogue with sound itself.
Objects, materials and the environment –a decision made in dialogue with objects, materials, and/or the environment themselves.

Non-present others– may encompass a decision in dialogue a non-present human, environment, object, or cultural reference.

'felt immediacy' – proximity to others' lived experience (Trevarthen 2009).

Frame – Goffman's (1979) notion of how people define what is going on in interactions using a range of different modes as boundary markers.
+ frame attunement to define what is attended to (Kendon 1990).

Higher-level action – Bracketed by an opening/closing of interaction and made up of a multiplicity of chained lower-level actions

Ideational – is a communicative *metafunction* fulfilling the function of communication of ideas that make meaning of an experience (Halliday 1978).

Contextual imaginative variation - identifies essential constituents of the experience (Giorgi and Giorgi 2003). If the experience were to 'collapse' without any constituent then it would be essential for the entirety.

Intensity of modes or modal intensity - Intensity means that the mode was observed was being used with particular emphasis, in for example the tension of the arm in a gesture (Norris 2004:79).

Intentional arc – in experiencing the world people respond with embodied knowledge to the call of perceptions that are increasingly refined bringing body and world together (Merleau-Ponty 1962).

Interpersonal - is a communicative *metafunction* fulfilling the function of maintaining relationships in dialogue (Halliday 1978).

Inter-objectivity – social interaction can be structured through objects and the objects have agency in relation with humans (Latour 1993, 1996).

Inter-subjectivity - the open attitude that is the precondition for mutuality (Duranti 2010), and takes the form of 'the variety of relations between perspectives' (Gillespie and Cornish 2010:19-20). (NB also used interchangeably for mutuality as in Trevarthen 2000).

I-It – an attitude of instrumental regard for the other (Buber 1970).

I-You – a reciprocated or mutual relation of dialogical regard with the other (Buber 1970).

Lower-level action – the smallest interactional meaning unit

Meta perspective - level of inter- subjectivity that 'reveals the presence of multiple perspectives within an single utterance or brief exchange' (Gillespie and Cornish 2010:35). i.e. A and B are each aware that the other relates to them; and a *meta-metaperspective* in which A and B each know that the other is aware that they each know the other relates to him or herself.

Mode – refers to a set of socially and culturally shaped resources for making meaning. Mode classifies a 'channel' of representation or communication for which previously no

overarching name had been proposed (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001; MODE 2012). A mode has no clear boundaries (Norris 2004: 11). It is a heuristic unit.

Modal density or **density of modes** – 'the modal intensity and/or modal complexity through which a higher-level action is constructed' (Norris 2004:79). It 'indicates the level of attention/awareness that a social actor places on a certain higher-level action' (Norris 2004:92).

Modal intensity or intensity of modes - Intensity means that the mode was observed was being used with particular emphasis, in for example the tension of the arm in a gesture (Norris 2004:79).

Multi-modal - The term multimodal communication builds on semiotic analysis of texts, images and objects (Kress and van Leewen 2001; Norris 2004) in many modes.

Multi-modality - an approach based on social semiotics acknowledging more than verbal language. It 'studies how and to what social and cultural effects people use and transform resources for communication' (MODE 2012: online).

Mutuality **–** constituent of decisions made with dialogical agency occurring when there was a transition from *I-It* into *I-You* relations.

Openness- constituent of decisions made with dialogical agency defined as a pre-condition for mutuality/inter-subjectivity. *Attention* to the other and *effort* were a part of *openness*.

Overtone - *I-You* forming an over-arching relation, a relational flow, within which there were *I-It* attitudes. Sometimes there was a characteristic mood *overtone* to the episode such as humour.

Phenomenological world - 'the sense that shines forth at the intersection of my experiences with those of others through a sort of gearing into each other' (2012:xxxxv).

Phenomenal mind - Chalmers (1996) conceptualises a theoretical division of the mind into the psychological and the phenomenal. The phenomenal mind as distinct from, but not separate from the psychological mind is conceived of as conscious experience or simply the state of awareness that centrally involves phenomenology (18). Aspects of this mind functioning are accessible in expressions and responses of people. (The mental notion of the psychological mind could be without any particular associated phenomenal quality).

Pragmatic means - 'A *means* functions pragmatically by communicating the upcoming occurrence of a shift in foregrounded higher-level action to the other participants' (Norris 2004:88, italics in original).

Semantic means – 'A *means* functions semantically by marking the end of a foregrounded higher-level action (or the beginning of a new higher level action), facilitating the organization of higher-level actions in the performer's own mind' (Norris 2004:88, italics in original).

Schema – 'patterns of repeatable actions [or thought] that can lead to early categories and then to logical classifications' (Athey 2007:49) e.g. going through a boundary schema

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Tracks - the *main-line* or *story-line track* forms the main business of the encounter (Goffman 1974:210); a *directional* track is a stream of signs, that is not in the main content of the activity, but serves to frame it; and a *disattend track* is a variety of actions not counted as part of the interaction, such as some postural readjustments.

Voices - Bakhtin's (1986) concept of meaning known from non-present others' previous communicative acts and meanings. Interactions are not isolated utterances.

Additional references

Chaplin, J. (1985) *Dictionary of Psychology* (2nd edition) New York: Dell

MODE (2012) *Glossary of Multimodal Terms* [online] https: //multimodalityglossary.wordpress.com (Accessed 6.01.2017)